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AUTHOR Bossone, Richard M.
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ABSTRACT

During the academic year 1977-78 a national survey was conducted to identify those competencies which various segments of the population consider important for functioning adults, and to ascertain which competencies should be taught in the schools. Data presented in this study are based on 2,908 questionnaire returns from 2,284 students (mostly in high school), 245 parents, 144 teachers, 86 administrators, 43 school board members, 75 employers, and 31 legislators. All groups sampled were asked to rate the importance of 54 adult competencies relating to employment, government and law, health, consumer economics, and community resources; and to indicate if such tasks should be taught in the schools. Five competencies were so designated: applying for a job, voting, interpreting payroll statements, selecting a balanced meal, and preparing budgets. Parents, teachers, and administrators were asked to indicate the degree of proficiency they believed the majority of students have achieved in reading, writing, arithmetic, listening, and speaking; the other groups were asked to identify student problems in these areas. Students had a higher opinion of their abilities than did adult respondents, particularly teachers, administrators and board members. When asked to identify the desirable approach for a minimal competency program, all groups favored giving equal emphasis to teaching academic skills and adult competencies. Relevant background information for each of the groups is also presented. (CP)

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Minimum Competencies: A National Survey

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by
Richard M. Bossone

Center for Advanced Study in Education
The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

CASE 11-78
1978

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National surveys involve all the problems and more that come with research endeavors. And usually they are never as successful as they might be because of the lack of support and assistance. When I thought of doing this study in 1977, I was indeed fortunate enough to be given adequate financial support and assistance from many generous people and institutions so that I might carry out this massive study. To name a few, I am deeply indebted to the following:

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MINIMUM COMPETENCIES:
A NATIONAL SURVEY

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Public concern about the value of the high school diploma is mounting in light of reports that many graduates cannot read, write, or compute beyond a grammar-school level. Many people have become skeptical or even hostile about what high schools are doing. In Long Island and San Francisco, some parents have even sued their children's high schools on the grounds of "educational malpractice." Parents want to be assured that their sons and daughters are up to grade level and that mere attendance is not the factor governing graduation. Declining test scores, as reported by those who administer the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), and American College Testing (ACT), have also had an impact on the public. To reverse this decline, the public, educators, and concerned politicians want to establish more rigorous high school graduation requirements.

The increasing demand for higher-educational standards does not, of course, focus only on the high schools. The majority of students who cannot do secondary-level work usually enter high school without adequate skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Indeed, many of these students, beginning in their early years in grammar school, pass from grade to grade without achieving any significant level of competency in the basic skills. As a result, they graduate from high school with diplomas which should attest to their literacy, but which, in fact, are

often merely records of their attendance at school.

Although the problem of high school graduates who cannot read, write, or compute well enough to succeed in our complicated society is not new, in the past many people conceived of these students as members of lower socio-economic groups--graduates of high schools in ghetto areas. But the luxury of believing that the unprepared graduate is someone else's child is no longer permitted to many parents--even those from middle-class rural or suburban areas--as they become increasingly aware that their own children are often deficient in academic skills and knowledge. That the problem is now nation-wide, crossing all social and economic barriers, is evidenced by the national furor now centered on the back-to-basics movement.

This national movement, primarily concerned with assessing the basic academic skills of students on the high school and grammar-school levels and, ultimately, with establishing competency standards which all students must meet, has proliferated in the last year. At the end of 1976, only sixteen states had taken action, but by the end of 1977, in varying forms and degrees, eleven states[1] had adopted legislation with respect to testing such skills, and twenty-two[2] states had enacted

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[1] These states are: California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington.

[2] These states are: Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming.

regulations through their state boards of education. The remaining states, whether through legislative or state board activity, are contemplating some form of action with respect to minimum competency testing. The Federal Government is also involved in the issue. Representative Ronald M. Mottl, an Ohio Democrat, has introduced two bills--HR 6088 and HR 7116--into Congress on this issue. These bills would require the states, before they are eligible to receive moneys under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, to establish proficiency requirements for high school graduates.

Although the primary emphasis in relation to competency testing seems to be on high school graduation, testing tied to grade promotion and to remedial assistance is also an important factor. Four states--Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, and Maryland--contemplate testing for grade promotion,[3] and of the thirty-three states already mentioned, twenty-one[4] either state or imply the importance of testing to identify students who need remedial work (perhaps the most important and least punitive aspect of competency testing).

This increased activity on the part of the states does not mean, however, that there is general agreement on what or how such competencies should be tested or that the back-to-basics movement is without detractors.

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[3]For further information on grade promotion, see the Appendix.

[4]Alabama, California, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Indeed, many educators view this movement as a punitive measure directed solely at the schools and its teachers--the educators are being tested, they suggest, and not the students. Some are resentful because the impetus for educational reform is centered in the state legislatures, and others see the movement as a way for legislators to justify budget cuts in school districts where a significant number of students do not meet competency standards.

The main thrust of such criticism, however, appears to focus on what many critics regard as the movement's reactionary elements. Not only educators, but also private citizens, are concerned that the focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic is merely a way of deemphasizing the many educational innovations implemented in our public schools in the last decade or two. For many of these critics, back-to-basics means back-to-conformity, with students forced to adhere to arbitrary discipline and dress rules. They are equally worried that the intellectual creativity of many students will be stifled. This movement, they fear, may lead to the elimination of courses in the fine arts and humanities, in the language and literature of ethnic cultures, in creative writing, and in art and music, while students spend the major part of the school day learning the basic rules of reading, writing, and arithmetic. What seems evident, however, from the increased activity on the state and federal levels, is that these detractors are in the minority.

The majority of Americans seem to favor an increased emphasis on the basics. They suggest that students who survive twelve years of

schooling without achieving a reasonable literacy level are severely handicapped in a society in which reading, writing, and arithmetic are components of everyday life. In their view, adults who cannot understand, and thus participate fully in, the legislative process, who are not aware of their basic rights as citizens, who cannot compute their taxes, balance their checkbooks, calculate the price of groceries, or compete for any but manual jobs are precluded from leading productive lives or appreciating the cultural benefits of their society.

The Problem

The real crux, then, is not whether the issue of competency testing will go away because it lacks supporters, but the direction such testing will take. Those responsible for establishing competency testing in the schools must, therefore, ask the following questions: what competencies do students need to survive in the demanding adult world, and what relationship do these competencies have to the basic skills taught in the classroom? The disparate actions and views of those who advocate such testing suggest that there are no easy answers to these questions. The majority of states have taken some form of action with respect to competency testing, yet none have identical procedures for assessing or remediating deficiencies in the basic skills. Indeed, few states have programs currently in operation. At this time, Arizona and Oregon mandate a test for high school graduation, and although California, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Washington have implemented testing procedures, none as yet involve either grade promotion

or high school graduation. Although virtually all of the movement's supporters identify reading, writing, and arithmetic as the skills that students will need in an adult environment, there seems to be little agreement among these supporters as to which adult functional competencies are important and, concomitantly, what their relationship is to "The Three R's" taught in the classroom. Indeed, little substantive research has been conducted outside the academic sector to determine what these activities are and how they might be integrated into an academic milieu. Thus, many states are handicapped in initiating competency testing because they lack a firm knowledge of the survival skills needed in an adult environment. The present study, concerned with identifying such survival skills, is one effort to remedy this gap.

General Purpose and Objectives

As stated previously, 33 states have implemented or plan to implement minimum competency testing in the elementary or secondary schools. Unfortunately, this movement, commonly referred to as the educational bandwagon of the 70's, has grown so rapidly that little attention has been given to defining what is meant by "minimum competencies" or to identify the approach the teaching of such competencies should take in the classroom. In short, many of the movement's advocates have placed the cart before the horse in their efforts to legislate the testing or teaching of such competencies without first establishing what these competencies are and how they should be taught in our classroom. The present study, then, was undertaken to identify the adult functional competencies

in the areas of occupational knowledge, government and law, health, consumer economics, and consumer resources that various segments of the population consider important tasks to be included in the secondary-school curriculum and, concomitantly, the major problems that students have in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The specific objectives consistent with this purpose were:

1. To select a representative sample of students, teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, legislators, and employers to participate in the research effort;
2. To elicit relevant background information from each group of respondents;
3. To identify student problems in reading, writing, and arithmetic;
4. To identify the key adult-functional competencies that each group considered important enough to be taught in secondary schools; and
5. To identify the most desirable approach for a minimum-competency program.

Procedure

To date, few studies have attempted to identify the specific skills that students will need when they leave school or to relate these skills to those taught in the classroom. One of the more ambitious attempts, however, was conducted by the Adult Performance Level (APL) Project.

This study was conducted to determine which competencies are essential for functioning adults and listed approximately 274 competencies in the areas of occupational knowledge, government and law, health, consumer economics, and consumer resources. In addition, the project also identified four skills which adults need to function effectively in society: communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), computation skills, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal relations skills.

With the permission of the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program, the investigator of this study selected 54 of these competencies as those which most appropriately could be taught in today's secondary schools by surveying small groups of educators, parents, and students. Those adult competencies selected by these groups were encompassed in a larger survey which is the basis for this report. To obtain the data needed to accomplish the objectives stated previously, a random sample of students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, employers, and legislators were chosen to be surveyed. Members of these various groups were sampled in urban, rural, and suburban areas throughout the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, and the Far West. Those most directly affected by the educational process and its outcome--students and parents--were the largest groups surveyed. Teachers, administrators, school board members, employers, and legislators--were also sampled, but in fewer numbers.

Questionnaires were sent to 4,000 students, 1,000 parents, 400

teachers, 250 administrators, 250 school board members, 200 employers, and 200 legislators--a total of 6,300 questionnaires. Data presented in this study is based on 2,908 returns--2,284 students, 245 parents, 144 teachers, 86 administrators, 43 board members, 73 employers, and 31 legislators.

Five slightly varied questionnaires were sent to (i) students, (ii) parents, (iii) employers, (iv) teachers, administrators, and school board members, and (v) legislators. All of the groups sampled were asked to rate on a four-point scale the degree of importance of certain adult functional competencies relating to employment, government and law, health, consumer economics, and community resources and to indicate whether they believed such tasks should be taught in the schools. Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were asked to identify student problems in reading, writing, arithmetic, and to indicate whether or not students are good listeners and speakers. Parents, employers, and legislators were asked to indicate the degree of proficiency they believed that the majority of students have achieved in reading, writing, arithmetic, listening, and speaking. Relevant background information was also sought from the various groups. All questionnaires were accompanied by a letter stating the nature and purpose of the study and inviting participation.

PART II

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Respondents

Number

As stated in the introduction, a random sample of students, teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, employers, and legislators were surveyed in urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout the United States. The number responding in each group is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Respondents

Students	2,284	Parents	245
Teachers	144	Employers	75
Administrators	86	Legislators	31
Board Members	43	TOTAL	2,908

School District Area

Only those directly involved in the educational process--students, teachers, administrators, and board members--were asked to describe the area--urban, suburban, or rural--in which their school districts are located. Approximately 48% of the students responding to this question reported that they attend schools in urban areas, whereas 45.8% of the teachers and 38.4% of the administrators describe their school districts

as suburban. The largest response from board members was from rural districts and the smallest, from urban districts. Table 2 gives a complete profile of school district areas.

Table 2

School District Area

Reported by Students, Teachers, Administrators, and Board Members

	Students		Teachers		Administrators		Board Members	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Urban	47.8	1,092	31.9	46	32.6	28	30.2	13
Suburban	36.3	830	45.8	66	38.4	33	32.6	14
Rural	12.6	287	13.9	20	19.8	17	37.2	16
No response	3.3	75	8.3	12	9.3	8	0	0

District Student Enrollment

Teachers, administrators, and board members were also asked to indicate the total student enrollment in their districts. A large number of teachers and administrators--60 (41.7%) and 36 (41.9%), respectively--did not respond to this question. Of the teachers who did answer this question, 7 (4.9%) indicated that more than 40,000 students were enrolled in their districts, 30 (20.8%) reported between 15,001 to 20,000 students, and 28 (19.4%), fewer than 5,000 students. Of the administrators responding, 4 (4.7%) indicated that their school districts had more than 40,000 students, 14 (16.3%) indicated that their districts had between

10,001 and 15,000 students, and 23 (26.7%) reported a total district enrollment of less than 5,000 students. The response from board members showed that 6 (14%) serve in districts with more than 40,000 students, 18 (41.9%), in districts with 5,001 and 10,000 students, and 11 (25.6%), in districts with 5,000 or fewer students. The response to this question is further elaborated in Table 3.

Table 3

Student Enrollment

Reported by Teachers, Administrators, and Board Members

District Student Enrollment	Teachers		Administrators		Board Members	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
0 to 5,000	19.4	28	26.7	23	25.5	11
5,001 to 10,000	4.2	6	5.8	5	41.8	18
10,001 to 15,000	9.0	13	16.2	14	4.7	2
15,001 to 20,000	20.8	30	1.2	1	9.3	4
20,001 to 25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
25,001 to 30,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
30,001 to 35,000	-	-	1.2	1	-	-
35,001 to 40,000	-	-	2.3	2	-	-
40,001 and over	4.9	7	4.7	4	14.0	6
No response	41.7	60	41.9	36	4.7	2

Background Information

Parents

Sex, Age, Marital Status, Ethnic Origin, and Number of Children

Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, approximately 75% were female and 25% were male. The individual ages of the parents ranged from 25 to 91, with the vast majority--70.7%--between the ages

of 30 and 49. Over 90% of the respondents indicated that they were married, and 86.9% identified themselves as caucasians. Only 9 parents (3.7%) identified themselves as black. The average number of children in each family was three, with 33 parents (13.5%) reporting that they had no school-age children living at home.

Family Income and Job Title

The median income of the parents was above the average family income in the United States. Of the 228 (93.1%) parents who responded to the question regarding family income, 143 (58.4%) indicated that their family incomes were over $15,000, and 52 (21.2%) families had incomes of $30,000 or more; on the other hand, 23 (9.4%) respondents had family incomes between $10,000 and $14,000, and 10 (4.1%) had incomes under $10,000.

The majority of the parents who answered the question concerning job titles reported that they worked. Of the 170 women respondents, 68 indicated that they worked either part- or full-time, and two stated that they were retired. The other 100 women identified themselves as housewives, many of whom stated that they did volunteer work in their communities. Thirty-two (32) of the working mothers were white-collar workers, 18 indicated that they were teachers or school administrators, and 11 that they were in middle management. Only two women were professionals, and 5 were blue-collar or farm workers. Since only a small percentage--17 (6.9%)--of the parents, both male and female, indicated that they were divorced, widowed, or separated, we may infer that most of the working mothers came from families with two incomes. All of the

53 male respondents who answered this question reported that they worked, with 41 of them indicating that they were professionals, educators, or middle managers. The other 12 male respondents were white collar, blue collar, or farm workers.

Academic Background

The majority of the parents--178 (72.7%)--reported that they had college backgrounds: 70 (28.6%) had some college; 41 (16.7%) had bachelor degrees; 19 (7.8%) had some graduate school; 29 (11.8%) had master degrees; and 19 (7.8%) had doctorate degrees. One (0.4%) parent had not graduated from high school and 52 (21.2%) of the parents had finished high school but had no college training. Eleven (4.5%) parents indicated that they had some technical training beyond the high school level.

A profile of the background of these parents is given in Table 4.

Table 4

Parents: Background Information

Item	Response	%	(N)
Sex	Male	24.5	60
	Female	71.8	176
	No response	3.6	9
Age	Under 25	0	0
	25-34	18.4	45
	35-44	38.0	93
	45-54	26.5	65
	55-64	9.4	23
	Over 65	1.2	3
	No response	6.5	16
Marital Status	Married	90.6	222
	Widowed	2.9	7
	Divorced	3.6	9
	Separated	0.4	1
	No response	2.4	6
Ethnic Origin	American Indian	2.0	5
	Asian	0.4	1
	Black	3.7	9
	Hispanic	1.2	3
	Caucasian	86.9	213
	Other	2.9	7
	No response	2.9	7
Number of Children	1	9.8	24
	2	32.7	80
	3	24.5	60
	4	13.1	32
	5	9.4	23
	6 or more	4.0	10
	No response	6.5	16
Number of School Age Children at home	None	13.5	33
	1	22.4	55
	2	31.8	78
	3	17.6	43
	4	5.7	14
	5	2.9	7
	6 or more	1.2	3
	No response	4.9	12

Table 4
(continued)

Parents: Background Information

Item	Response	%	(N)
Family Annual Income	Under $5,000	0.4	1
	$ 5,000-$ 9,999	3.7	9
	$10,000-$14,999	9.4	23
	$15,000-$19,999	23.7	58
	$20,000-$24,999	17.6	43
	$25,000-$29,999	17.1	42
	$30,000 or more	21.2	52
	No response	6.9	17

		%	Male (N)	Female (N)
Job Title	Professional	4.9	10	2
	Teacher, School Administrator	11.8	11	18
	Management	12.7	20	11
	White Collar	15.1	5	32
	Blue Collar	3.3	5	3
	Farm Worker	1.6	2	2
	Retired	0.8	-	2
	Housewife	40.8	-	100
	No response	9.0	22	

		%	(N)
Academic Background	Some High School	0.4	1
	High School Diploma	21.2	52
	Some College	28.6	70
	Bachelor	16.7	41
	Some Graduate School	7.8	19
	Master	11.8	29
	Doctor	7.8	19
	Other	4.5	11
	No response	1.2	3

Students

Grade and Primary Language

Of the 2,284 students who were surveyed, 768 (33.6%) indicated that they were in the 10th grade, 520 (22.8%), in the 11th grade, 636 (27.8%), in the 12th grade, and 126 (5.5%). in their first year of college. A small group of students--212 (9.3%)--specified grade levels other than those listed on the questionnaire. Most of these students were in the 9th grade or in their second year of college.

The students were also asked if a language other than English was spoken in their homes, and 1,915 (83.8%) answered "no." Of the 369 (16.2%) students who answered "yes," the largest number--148 (6.5%)--listed Spanish as their primary home language. Others indicated Italian, Chinese, French, and German in that order.

Jobs and Other Outside Activities

The students were asked if they had jobs and, if so, to indicate how many hours they worked each week. There were 965 (42.3%) students who worked, for an average of 18.8 hours a week. Of these, 284 (12.5%) indicated that they worked ten or fewer hours a week, and 77 (2.9%), 40 or more hours a week.

The students were also asked to list the activities which take up most of their time outside of school. The largest number--930 (40.7%)--listed social events (dating, sports, etc.) as their primary activity; 417 (18.3%) listed their jobs; 377 (16.5%), homework; 210 (9.2%), family duties; and 108 (4.7%), watching television. Only 31 (1.4%) of the

students listed reading as their primary activity.

Academic Records and Academic Objectives

The students were asked to describe their academic records on a five-point scale: honors, average in some courses but excellent in others, average, average in some courses but having difficulty in others, and below average. Of the students who responded to this question, 374 (16.4%) described themselves as honor students, 788 (34.5%), as above average, 745 (32.6%) as average, 319 (14%), as average but having difficulty in some courses, and 26 (1.1%), as below average. In effect, the vast majority of the students believed themselves to be average or above-average students.

The students were then asked to indicate the highest academic degree they intended to complete. Only 263 (11.5%) of the respondents specified a high school diploma, whereas 494 (21.6%) reported that they would finish college and 840 (36.7%), that they would go on to graduate school. A small number--105 (4.6%)--indicated that they would attend technical schools after graduating from high school, and 503 (22%) of the respondents reported that they would complete some college but did not expect to earn bachelor degrees.

A profile of the background of these students is given in Table 5.

Table 5

Students: Background Information

Item	Response	%	(N)
Grade Level	10th Grade	33.6	768
	11th Grade	22.8	520
	12th Grade	27.8	636
	1st Year College	5.5	126
	Other	9.3	212
	No response	1.0	22
Primary Language Spoken in Home	English	83.8	1,915
	Spanish	6.5	148
	Italian	2.5	56
	Chinese	1.6	37
	French	1.1	26
	German	0.5	11
	Other	4.0	91
Hours Worked Outside of School	0 - 10	12.5	284
	11 - 20	15.4	349
	21 - 30	8.9	200
	31 - 40	4.9	110
	Over 40	0.6	22
	No response	57.7	1,319
Non-School Activities	Job	18.3	417
	Family Duties	9.2	210
	Homework	16.5	377
	Television	4.7	108
	Pleasure Reading	1.4	31
	Social Activities	40.7	930
	Other	4.5	103
	No response	4.7	108
Students' Description of Their Academic Record	Honor	16.4	374
	Above Average	34.5	788
	Average	32.6	745
	Average with Some Difficulty	14.0	319
	Below Average	1.1	26
	No response	1.4	32

Table 5
(continued)

Students: Background Information

Item	Response	%	(N)
Academic Objective	High School Diploma	11.5	263
	Some College	22.0	503
	Bachelor Degree	21.6	494
	Some Graduate School	5.1	117
	Master Degree	21.8	499
	Doctor Degree	9.8	224
	Other	4.6	105
	No response	3.6	79

Teachers, Administrators and Board Members

Grades and Subjects Taught

Teachers were asked to identify which grades and subjects they taught. The vast majority of the respondents were high school teachers, and most of them reported that they taught more than one grade. The major subjects taught by these teachers were English, Mathematics, Vocational Studies, the Social Sciences, and the Sciences.

Years in Present Position

Teachers, together with administrators and board members, were also asked how many years they had been in their present positions. In the case of teachers, 35 (24.3%) reported that they had been teaching for five years or less, and 35 (24.3%), that they had been teaching between 6 and 10 years. A majority of teachers, 74 (51.4%), reported that they had been teaching between 11 and 34 years; twelve of these teachers reported that they had been teaching more than 26 years. In general, the administrators had been in their positions longer than the teachers, with 43 (50%) reporting that they had held their jobs for more than 10 years. In contrast, the vast majority, 33 (76.8%), of the board members had held their positions for fewer than ten years.

Professional Training

The respondents were also asked to identify the degrees they held and to indicate, if they did not already have one, whether they were interested in obtaining a M.A., M.S., Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree. Sixty-two (43.1%) of the teachers had either B.A. or B.S. degrees, and 68 (47.2%) had M.A. or M.S. degrees. No teacher had a Ph.D., and only one had an Ed.D. Sixty

(41.7%) of the teachers indicated that they were interested in further education, and 46 (31.9%) of these reported that they would like to obtain a M.A. or M.S. degree.

In contrast to the teachers, the vast majority of school administrators had graduate degrees. Forty-seven (54.6%) had M.A. or M.S. degrees, and 29 (33.8%) had Ed.D or Ph.D. degrees. Only 14 (16.3%) of the administrators indicated that they were interested in further schooling, of which the majority listed an Ed.D. degree as their goal. Of the 43 board members surveyed, 5 (11.6%) indicated that they held doctorate degrees, 8 (18.6%), master degrees, and 11 (25.6%), bachelor degrees. One (2.3%) board member had not gone beyond the eighth grade, 3 (7%) had not gone beyond high school, and 5 (11.6%) had some technical training or college. Only 3 (7%) of the board members stated that they were interested in further schooling.

A profile of these respondents is given in Table 6.

Table 6

Teachers, Administrators, and Board Members:
Background Information

	Teachers		Administrators		Board Members	
Years in Present Position	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
5 years or less	24.3	35	15.1	13	41.9	18
6 - 10 years	24.3	35	33.7	29	34.9	15
11 - 15 years	20.8	30	23.3	20	16.3	7
16 - 20 years	11.1	16	15.1	13	-	-
21 - 25 years	7.6	11	5.8	5	7.0	3
26 years and over	8.3	12	5.8	5	-	-
No response	3.6	5	1.2	1	-	-
Professional Training						
Ph.D.	-	-	10.5	9	9.3	4
Ed.D.	0.7	1	23.3	20	2.3	1
J.D.	-	-	1.2	1	-	-
M.A. or M.S.	47.2	68	54.6	47	18.6	8
B.A. or B.S.	43.1	62	1.2	1	25.6	11
Some College or Technical School	6.9	10	8.1	7	11.6	5
High School	-	-	-	-	7.0	3
Eighth Grade	-	-	-	-	2.3	1
No response	2.1	3	1.2	1	23.3	10
Interested in Further Schooling						
No	12.5	18	16.3	14	37.2	16
Yes	41.7	60	16.3	14	7.0	3
No response	45.8	66	67.4	58	55.8	24
Goal						
M.A. or M.S.	31.9	46	1.2	1	2.3	1
Ed.D.	3.5	5	12.8	11	2.3	1
Ph.D.	6.3	9	4.7	4	7.0	3
No response	58.3	84	81.4	70	88.4	38

Employers

Title, Years in Position, and Education

Questionnaires were sent to those individuals responsible for hiring or setting employment policies in all areas of business, including banking, manufacturing, farming, public utilities, department stores, hotels, restaurants, and service organizations. Most of the respondents listed their job titles as manager, director, officer, or owner. The largest number--34 (45.3%)--responding to the questionnaire had been in their present positions for five or fewer years, 17 (22.7%), between 6 and 10 years, and 15 (20%), between 11 and 20 years. The vast majority--59 (78.7%)--indicated that they had graduated from college; and 10 (13.4%) of these had graduate degrees.

Screening and Minimum Requirements for Employment

The employers were asked if their job responsibilities included the screening of applicants or the training of employees, and the vast majority--64 (85.3%)--replied "yes." They were also asked if their firms had minimum requirements for employees and to specify what these requirements were. Slightly less than half--37 (49.3%)--replied that their firms did have such requirements, and 14 of these (37.8%) stated that employees must have a high school diploma. Many replied that requirements depended on the position applied for, and a few stated that "honesty and a willingness to work" were their only criteria for employment.

Legislators

Office, Description of Constituency, and Education

Of the legislators who responded to the questionnaire, 16 (51.6%) were state senators and 10 (32.2%) were assemblymen; 5 (16.1%) did not indicate which office they held. In response to the question asking how many years they had been in office, 11 (35.5%) indicated that they had been in office for 5 years or less; 9 (29%), between 6 and 10 years; and 5 (16.1%), between 11 and 22 years; 6 (19.4%) legislators did not answer this question. Nine (29%) of the legislators reported that their constituencies were suburban in makeup; 6 (19.4%), urban; and 6 (19.4%), rural; 10 (32.2%) of the legislators did not describe their constituencies. Twenty-two (71%) of the legislators were college graduates, of which 5 (22.7%) had law degrees, 6(27.2%) had either M.A. or M.S. degrees, and 1 (4.5%) legislator had a Ph.D. Only 4 (12.9%) legislators reported that they had not graduated from college, and 5 (16.1%) did not give any information on their educational backgrounds.

Students' Proficiencies and Problems

Respondent Opinions Regarding Student Proficiencies

Parents, employers, and legislators were asked to indicate the degree of proficiency--great, some, very little, or none--that they believed students had achieved in reading, writing, mathematics, listening, and speaking.

Reading

There seemed to be a general consensus among the three groups as to students' abilities in reading. A vast majority--182 (75.2%) parents, 54 (72%) employers, and 20 (76.9%) legislators--believed that students had some reading proficiency, and a smaller number--43 (17.8%) parents, 20 (26.7%) employers, and 3 (11.5%) legislators--that they had very little reading proficiency. Only 16 (6.6%) parents, 1 (1.3%) employer, and 3 (11.5%) legislators believed that students had great reading proficiency, and 1 (0.4%) parent reported that students had no reading proficiency.

Writing

There was a consensus among the groups that students had less proficiency in writing than in reading. A majority of the employers--51 (68%)--thought that the students had very little writing proficiency, an opinion with which 109 (45.2%) parents and 11 (44%) legislators agreed. A slight majority--121 (50.2%) and 13 (52%)--of parents and legislators, but only 22 (29.3%) employers believed that students had some writing proficiency. Only 4 (1.7%) parents and 1 (1.3%) employer gave students the highest proficiency rating; and 7 (2.9%)

parents, 1 (1.3%) employer, and 1 (4%) legislator gave them the lowest rating.

Mathematics

Each of the groups rated the students higher in mathematics than in writing. A majority of parents and legislators--169 (70.1%) and 19 (76%), respectively--believed that students had some proficiency in mathematics, whereas only 56 (23.2%) parents and 6 (24%) legislators thought that students had very little proficiency in this skill. In contrast, only 31 (41.9%) employers thought that students had some proficiency in mathematics, whereas 37 (50%) indicated that students had very little proficiency in this skill. Although 13 (5.4%) parents and 3 (4.1%) employers thought that students had great proficiency in mathematics, and 3 (1.2%) parents and 3 (4.1%) employers, very little proficiency, none of the legislators gave students the highest or lowest rating in this area.

Listening

Agreement among parents, employers, and legislators on students' listening proficiency was close: 107 (44.4%) parents, 30 (41.1%) employers, and 12 (48%) legislators thought that students had some proficiency in listening and 108 (44.8%) parents, 38 (52.1%) employers, and 12 (48%) legislators, that they had very little proficiency. Six (2.5%) parents and 1 (1.4%) employer believed that students had great listening proficiency, and 20 (8.3%) parents, 4 (5.5%) employers, and 1 (4%) legislator, no listening proficiency.

Speaking

Parents and employers held similar views on the students' speaking abilities: 111 (46.1%) parents and 37 (50%) employers thought that students had very little speaking proficiency and 99 (41.1%) parents and 31 (41.9%) employers that they had some proficiency. In contrast, 15 legislators (60%) believed that students had some proficiency in this area, and 9 (36%), very little proficiency. A small number of parents and employers--15 (6.2%) parents and 3 (4.1%) employers--believed that students had great speaking proficiency and about the same number in each group, 16 (6.6%) parents and 3 (4.1%) employers, that they had no speaking proficiency. None of the legislators gave students the highest rating, and only 1 (4%) gave them the lowest rating.

Respondent opinions regarding student proficiencies in reading, writing, mathematics, listening, and speaking are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Respondent Opinions
Regarding Student Proficiencies in
Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Listening, and Speaking

		Parents (N=245)		Employers (N=75)		Legislators (N=31)	
	Proficiency	%*	(N)	%*	(N)	%*	(N)
Reading							
	Great	6.6	16	1.3	1	11.5	3
	Some	75.2	182	72.0	54	76.9	20
	Very Little	17.8	43	26.7	20	11.5	3
	None	0.4	1	-	-	-	-
Writing							
	Great	1.7	4	1.3	1	-	-
	Some	50.2	121	29.3	22	52.0	13
	Very Little	45.2	109	68.0	51	44.0	11
	None	2.9	7	1.3	1	4.0	1
Mathematics							
	Great	5.4	13	4.1	3	-	-
	Some	70.1	169	41.9	31	76.0	19
	Very Little	23.2	56	50.0	37	24.0	6
	None	1.2	3	4.1	3	-	-
Listening							
	Great	2.5	6	1.4	1	-	-
	Some	44.4	107	41.1	30	48.0	12
	Very Little	44.8	108	52.1	38	48.0	12
	None	8.3	20	5.5	4	4.0	1
Speaking							
	Great	6.2	15	4.1	3	-	-
	Some	41.1	99	41.9	31	60.0	15
	Very Little	46.1	111	50.0	37	36.0	9
	None	6.6	16	4.1	3	4.0	1

* Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Respondent Opinions Regarding Student Problems

Teachers, administrators, and board members were asked to give their perceptions of the problems students have in reading, writing, and mathematics on a four-point scale: great difficulty, some difficulty, very little difficulty, and no difficulty. The students were also asked to rate themselves in these same areas on the same scale.

Reading

Reading problems were divided into five areas: students' abilities (1) to understand the meaning of words in context, (2) to grasp central ideas, (3) to grasp supporting ideas, (4) to understand the author's purpose, and (5) to integrate their reading with experience. In all areas, the majority of students felt that they had little or no difficulties: 86.6% reported that they had very little or no difficulty in integrating their reading with experience; 77.1%, in grasping central ideas; 76.7%, in understanding the meaning of words in context; 75.5%, in understanding the author's purpose; and 66.1%, in grasping supporting ideas.

In contrast, the majority of teachers, administrators, and board members believed that most students have some or great difficulties in all areas: 79.4% of the teachers, 74.3% of the administrators, and 84.2% of the board members felt that students had some or great difficulty in grasping supporting ideas; 77.3% of the teachers, 82.7% of the administrators, and 79% of the board members, in understanding the author's purpose; 70% of the teachers, 75.7% of the administrators, and

75.7% of the board members, in integrating their reading with experience; 64.7% of the teachers, 65.8% of the administrators, and 73.7% of the board members, in grasping central ideas; and 75.7% of the teachers, 59.2% of the administrators, and 68.4% of the board members, in understanding the meaning of words in context. There was, as can be seen by the above percentages, a wide disparity between the students' perceptions of their problems and the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and board members.

Writing

Writing problems were divided into seven areas: students' abilities to organize ideas effectively, to state ideas clearly, to construct sentences without gross errors in grammar, to use punctuation and mechanics correctly, to use words properly, to spell correctly, and to write legibly.

A greater number of students believed that they had more difficulties in writing than in reading, although the majority of students reported that they had little or no difficulties in writing: 57.4% felt that they had little or no difficulty in organizing ideas; 60%, in stating ideas clearly; 64%, in constructing sentences without gross errors; 63%, in using punctuation and mechanics; 78.3%, in using words properly; 72.8%, in spelling; and 78.1%, in writing legibly.

In contrast, the majority of teachers, administrators, and board members felt that most students had some or great difficulties in the area of writing: 89.3% of the teachers, 92.1% of the administrators, and 94.8% of the board members believed that students had some or great

difficulty in organizing ideas; 80.6% of the teachers, 93.1% of the administrators, and 92.1% of the board members, in stating ideas clearly; 79.4% of the teachers, 77.6% of the administrators, and 81.6% of the board members, in constructing sentences without gross errors; 78.9% of the teachers, 81.5% of the administrators, and 86.8% of the board members, in using punctuation and mechanics; 66.9% of the teachers, 65.3% of the administrators, and 76.4% of the board members, in using words properly; 86.5% of the teachers, 82.9% of the administrators, and 73.7% of the board members, in spelling; and 65.1% of the teachers, 71.6% of the administrators, and 68.4% of the board members, in writing legibly. Although a wide disparity again existed between the students' perceptions of their problems and the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and board members, the general consensus was that students had the most difficulty in organizing ideas.

Mathematics

Mathematical problems were divided into five areas: students' abilities to add, to subtract, to multiply, to divide, and to solve problems. Students felt that they had the least difficulties in the area of mathematics: 96.7% reported that they had very little or no difficulty in adding; 96.8%, in subtracting; 95%, in multiplying; 90.3%, in dividing; and 80.8%, in solving problems.

In general, teachers and board members also believed that students had the least difficulty in mathematics: 66.7% of teachers and 63.1% of board members reported that students had little or no difficulty in adding; 62.1% of the teachers and 57.9% of board members, in subtracting;

and 50.5% of teachers and 57.9% of board members, in multiplying. The majority of teachers and board members did report, however, that students had difficulties in dividing and in solving problems: 68% of the teachers and 64.9% of the board members indicated that students had some or great difficulties in dividing; and 76.8% of the teachers and 86.9% of the board members, in solving problems.

The majority of administrators, in contrast to teachers and board members, believed that students had difficulties in all five areas of mathematics: 89.4% of the administrators reported that students had some or great difficulties in adding; 93.3%, in subtracting, 52.7%, in multiplying; 59.7%, in dividing; and 86.3%, in solving problems. Although students, teachers, and board members were in agreement that students had the most difficulties in solving problems, administrators believed that students had more difficulties in subtracting and adding.

For a full report of student problems in reading, writing, and mathematics, see Table 8.

Table 8

Respondent Opinions
Regarding Student Problems in
Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

	Students				
	Great Difficulty % *	Some Difficulty % *	Very Little Difficulty % *	No Difficulty % *	N
READING					
1. Ability to understand meaning of words in context	1.6	21.7	47.0	29.7	N=2235
2. Ability to grasp central idea	2.2	20.7	43.7	33.4	N=2248
3. Ability to grasp supporting ideas	4.0	29.9	43.1	23.0	N=2224
4. Ability to understand the author's purpose	2.7	21.8	44.9	30.6	N=2229
5. Ability to integrate what they read with their own experience	1.4	11.9	35.8	50.8	N=2238
WRITING					
1. Ability to organize ideas	8.0	34.6	35.9	21.5	N=2240
2. Ability to state ideas clearly	6.3	33.7	39.4	20.6	N=2244
3. Ability to construct sentences without gross errors in grammar	6.7	29.3	40.2	23.8	N=2230
4. Adequate knowledge of punctuation and mechanics	7.2	29.8	42.3	20.7	N=2246
5. Ability to use words properly	2.2	19.5	48.5	29.8	N=2244
6. Ability to spell	6.4	20.8	39.5	33.3	N=2236
7. Ability to write legibly	4.2	17.7	31.3	46.8	N=2232
MATHEMATICS					
1. Ability to add properly	0.8	2.5	14.2	82.5	N=2241
2. Ability to subtract properly	0.7	2.5	15.4	81.4	N=2242
3. Ability to multiply properly	1.2	3.8	17.4	77.6	N=2238
4. Ability to divide properly	1.9	7.8	22.3	68.0	N=2234
5. Ability to solve problems properly	3.6	15.6	40.4	40.4	N=2195

* Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Teachers					Administrators				
Great ifficulty %*	Some Difficulty %*	Very Little Difficulty %*	No Difficulty %*	N	Great Difficulty %*	Some Difficulty %*	Very Little Difficulty %*	No Difficulty %*	N
8.8	66.9	22.8	1.5	N=136	7.9	51.3	38.2	2.6	N=76
9.6	55.1	30.9	4.4	N=136	10.5	55.3	32.9	1.3	N=76
16.2	63.2	19.1	1.5	N=136	16.2	58.1	24.3	1.4	N=74
15.9	61.4	22.0	0.8	N=132	22.7	60.0	16.0	1.3	N=75
15.4	54.6	26.9	3.1	N=130	17.6	58.1	21.6	2.7	N=74
22.1	67.2	9.9	0.8	N=131	40.8	51.3	7.9	0	N=76
23.9	56.7	18.7	0.7	N=134	47.9	45.2	6.8	0	N=73
25.2	54.2	18.3	2.3	N=131	25.0	52.6	21.1	1.3	N=76
26.3	52.6	20.3	0.8	N=133	19.7	61.8	17.1	1.3	N=76
12.0	54.9	30.8	2.3	N=133	13.3	52.0	32.0	2.7	N=75
21.8	64.7	13.5	0	N=133	21.1	61.8	17.1	0	N=76
8.3	56.8	34.1	0.8	N=132	10.8	60.8	28.4	0	N=74
2.0	31.4	56.9	9.8	N=102	22.7	66.7	10.7	0	N=75
1.9	35.9	53.4	8.7	N=103	29.3	64.0	6.7	0	N=75
5.9	43.6	45.5	5.0	N=101	4.1	48.6	43.2	4.1	N=74
12.0	56.0	29.0	3.0	N=100	12.5	47.2	36.1	4.2	N=72
17.2	59.6	21.2	2.0	N=99	27.4	58.9	11.0	2.7	N=73

Board Members				
Great Difficulty %*	Some Difficulty %*	Very Little Difficulty %*	No Difficulty %*	N
7.9	60.5	31.6	0	N=38
7.9	65.8	26.3	0	N=38
18.4	65.8	15.8	0	N=38
13.2	65.8	21.1	0	N=38
13.5	62.2	24.3	0	N=37
31.6	63.2	5.3	0	N=38
42.1	50.0	7.9	0	N=38
31.6	50.0	15.8	2.6	N=38
18.4	68.4	10.5	2.6	N=38
13.2	63.2	23.7	0	N=38
10.5	63.2	21.1	5.3	N=38
7.9	60.5	31.6	0	N=38
5.3	31.6	52.6	10.5	N=38
2.6	39.5	47.4	10.5	N=38
2.6	39.5	52.6	5.3	N=38
5.4	59.5	35.1	0	N=37
23.7	63.2	13.2	0	N=38

Listening and Speaking

Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were also asked if they thought students were good listeners and speakers. The majority--63.1% and 55.9%, respectively--of teachers and administrators believed that students were not good listeners. In contrast, the majority--87.6% and 52.8%, respectively--of students and board members reported that students were good listeners. A majority of all groups--61.3% of teachers, 56.1% of administrators, 52.8% of board members and 50.1% of students--responded that students were good speakers. As shown in Table 9, teachers apparently think that students are better speakers than listeners, whereas students believe themselves to be better listeners than speakers.

Table 9

Respondent Opinions
Regarding Student Listening and Speaking Abilities

	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Good Listener	(N=2204)	(N=122)	(N=68)	(N=36)
YES	87.6%	36.9%	44.1%	52.8%
NO	12.4%	63.1%	55.9%	47.2%
Good Speaker	(N=2192)	(N=119)	(N=66)	(N=36)
YES	50.1%	61.3%	56.1%	52.8%
NO	49.9%	38.7%	43.9%	47.2%

Respondent Opinions Regarding the Importance of Adult Functional Competencies

The primary purpose of this survey was to determine which adult functional competencies the respondents believed to be most important in terms of the skills required of an adult and, concomitantly, whether they believed that these skills should be taught in schools. In keeping with this purpose, a total of 54 competencies from the five broad areas of occupational knowledge, government and law, health, consumer economics, and community resources were selected from the APL study, and the respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each task on the following scale: very important, important, somewhat important, and not important.

Occupational Knowledge

Six subsidiary competencies were listed under this broad category. Three were primarily concerned with the job-seeking process:

1. using words properly on employment applications and on the job;
2. writing letters to request applications and interviews; and
3. using advertisements and other resources for finding jobs;

and three focused on employment competencies in providing and interpreting job-related information:

1. filling out various employment forms;
2. using payroll statements to calculate wages and deductions; and
3. using pamphlets to determine union benefits and obligations.

A majority of the respondents in each group believed that the job-seeking skills were very important or important. With respect to using words properly on employment applications and on the job, 45.7% of the students and 44.6% of the employers responded that this competency was very important, and 39.3% of the students and 47.3% of the employers, that it was important. A majority in each of the groups--71.4% of the parents, 60.7% of the teachers, 56.6% of the administrators, 56.4% of the board members, and 60% of the legislators--rated this skill as very important.

Writing business letters to request applications and interviews was considered to be very important by 42.5% of the employers and 33.3% of the legislators and important by 32.9% of the employers and 56.7% of the legislators. The majority of the respondents in the other groups--57% of the students, 64.9% of the parents, 58.3% of the teachers, 59.5% of the administrators, and 62.2% of the board members--rated this competency as very important. It is noteworthy that more than one fifth of the employers, the largest percentage in any group, rated this task as only somewhat important.

Although the majority of the respondents believed that using advertisements and other resources to find jobs was very important or important, not as many gave it the highest rating: 26.7% of the students, 35% of the parents, 37% of the teachers, 38.6% of the administrators, 20.5% of the board members, 25.7% of the employers, and 27.6% of the legislators listed this competency as very important, whereas 41.8% of the students, 48.6% of the parents, 46.4% of the teachers, 43.4% of the administrators, 56.4%

of the board members, 40.5% of the employers, and 65.5% of the legislators listed it as important. More than one fourth of the employers, the largest percentage in any group, rated this competency as only somewhat important.

With respect to the skills concerned with providing and interpreting job-related information, a majority in all groups--52.3% of the students, 65.6% of the parents, 57.9% of the teachers, 55.4% of the administrators, 54.1% of the board members, 52.7% of the employers, and 53.3% of the legislators--believed that filling out various employment forms was very important.

Using payroll statements to calculate wages and deductions was considered by all groups to be less important than filling in forms. Although a majority in each group reported that this task was very important or important, less than a majority rated it as very important--49.5% of the students, 38.3% of the parents, 44.4% of the teachers, 35.7% of the administrators, 17.9% of the board members, 17.6% of the employers, and 20% of the legislators. More than one fourth (28.4%) of the employers, again the largest percentage in any group, thought that this task was only somewhat important, and 9.5%, that it was not important.

Using pamphlets from unions to determine benefits and obligations received the lowest rating of the six competencies from all respondents. Students and parents, however, gave this task a higher rating than the other groups: 21.5% of the students and 17.7% of the parents listed this competency as very important, and 37.7% of the students and 42.8%

of the parents, as important. A majority in each of the other groups believed this task to be somewhat or not important: 39.5% of the teachers, 45.1% of the administrators, 48.6% of the board members, 37.8% of the employers, and 43.3% of the legislators rated this task as somewhat important, and 14.7% of the teachers, 9.8% of the administrators, 13.5% of the board members, 23% of the employers and 6.7% of the legislators, as not important.

The three tasks--using words properly, writing letters, and filling in forms--that received the highest rating from the respondents were concerned with the communication process, particularly with writing skills. It is also noteworthy that of the seven groups surveyed, employers assigned the tasks under occupational knowledge a lower rating of importance than did the other respondents.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 10.

TABLE 10

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Occupational Knowledge					
Using words properly that are commonly found on employment applications, on the job, etc.	45.7	39.3	13.5	1.5	N=2202
Using advertisements and other sources that may lead to employment.	26.7	41.8	25.7	5.9	N=2175
Writing a business letter including personal data, experience, aptitudes and goals, to request an application for an interview.	57.0	33.5	8.1	1.4	N=2185
Filling out various sample employment forms correctly and completely.	52.3	34.6	11.2	1.9	N=2176
Using pamphlets from labor unions which explain union benefits and obligations.	21.5	37.7	33.2	7.6	N=2126
Using payroll statements to calculate hourly wages, piece-work rates, percentage of tax deductions, social security deductions, insurance deductions, etc.	49.5	35.8	12.2	2.6	N=2101

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
71.4	24.9	3.7	0	N=245	60.7	30.7	7.9	0.7	N=140
35.0	48.6	16.0	0.4	N=243	37.0	46.4	13.8	2.9	N=138
64.9	29.4	5.7	0	N=245	58.3	33.1	7.2	1.4	N=139
65.6	30.3	4.1	0	N=244	57.9	28.6	11.4	2.1	N=140
17.7	42.8	30.9	8.6	N=243	10.1	35.7	39.5	14.7	N=129
38.3	39.2	21.2	1.2	N=240	44.4	36.3	14.8	4.4	N=135

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
56.6	36.1	7.2	0	N=83	56.4	43.6	0	0	N=39
38.6	43.4	18.1	0	N=79	20.5	56.4	23.1	0	N=39
59.5	33.3	6.0	1.2	N=84	62.2	32.4	5.4	0	N=37
55.4	34.9	8.4	1.2	N=83	54.1	40.5	5.4	0	N=37
9.8	35.4	45.1	9.8	N=82	13.5	24.3	48.6	13.5	N=37
35.7	46.4	16.7	1.2	N=84	17.9	56.4	20.5	5.1	N=39

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
44.6	47.3	8.1	0	N=74	60.0	36.7	3.3	0	N=30
25.7	40.5	29.7	4.1	N=74	27.6	65.5	6.9	0	N=29
42.5	32.9	23.3	1.4	N=73	33.3	56.7	10.0	0	N=30
52.7	35.1	12.2	0	N=74	53.3	36.7	10.0	0	N=30
12.2	27.0	37.8	23.0	N=74	3.3	46.7	43.3	6.7	N=30
17.6	44.6	28.4	9.5	N=74	20.0	56.7	20.0	3.3	N=30

Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were also asked to designate which of the six tasks should be taught in school. With the exception of using pamphlets to determine union benefits and obligations, the majority of the adult respondents replied that these tasks should be included in the school curriculum. Students indicated that, with the exceptions of using pamphlets to determine union benefits and obligations and using ads and other resources to find jobs, these competencies should be taught in school. The four groups were also asked if any of these tasks were now taught in school and, if so, whether the focus was major or minor. Very few of the respondents specified a particular task, and the majority of respondents reported that, when these tasks were taught, the focus was minor.

In addition, parents, employers, and legislators were asked to indicate if these tasks should be taught in school and to designate which ones. A vast majority of the respondents--95.8% of the parents, 87.3% of the employers, and 93.3% of the legislators--replied that these tasks should be included in the curriculum, but there was no significant agreement as to which specific tasks should be taught. The three groups were also asked to indicate whether the teaching of these competencies should have a major or a minor focus, and the majority of the respondents replied that the focus should be minor.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 11.

TABLE 11

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Occupational Knowledge

	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Using words properly that are commonly found on employment applications, on the job, etc.	53.7	56.9	59.3	58.1
Using advertisements and other sources that may lead to employment.	44.3	52.8	55.8	51.2
Filling out various sample employment forms correctly and completely.	56.9	56.9	58.1	58.1
Writing a business letter including personal data, experience, aptitudes and goals, to request an application for an interview.	58.7	59.7	60.5	58.1
Using pamphlets from labor unions which explain union benefits and obligations.	40.7	43.1	41.9	37.2
Using payroll statements to calculate hourly wages, piece-work rates, percentage of tax deductions, social security deductions, insurance deductions, etc.	57.9	56.3	57.0	53.5

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should the above tasks be taught in school?	95.8	4.2	87.3	12.7	93.3	6.7

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Should these tasks be a major focus of teaching or a minor one?	34.8	64.3	31.7	66.7	32.1	67.9

Government and Law

Eight subsidiary competencies were included under this category. Four were primarily concerned with understanding the rights and obligations of citizenship and with using governmental agencies effectively:

1. registering to vote and following established voting procedures;

2. understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life;

3. applying for various governmental licenses and understanding the circumstances for which they are needed; and

4. identifying the governmental agency responsible for servicing individual and community needs.

The other four focused on specific skills needed by citizens to cope effectively with governmental forms and regulations:

1. using income tax tables to calculate tax rates;

2. associating words and symbols encountered in the area of government and law with their meanings:

3. using government savings bond payment tables to determine the worth of bonds at various dates after purchase; and

4. using interest rates on city bonds to calculate amounts of interest at various dates after purchase.

A majority of the respondents in each group felt that the competencies associated with understanding the rights and obligations of citizenship and with using agencies effectively were very important or important. With respect to registering to vote and following established voting procedures, the vast majority of the adult respondents reported that this competency was very important. Of the six adult

groups, 78.3% of the parents, 62.1% of the teachers, 64.6% of the administrators, 75.7% of the board members, 61.6% of the employers, and 67.7% of the legislators give this competency the highest rating. In contrast, less than half (47.9%) of the students believed this task to be very important, while the remaining 52.1% thought that it was important.

Understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life was considered the second most important competency by the adult respondents. A majority of the adults--62.2% of the parents, 51.2% of the teachers, 56.6% of the administrators, 54.1% of the board members, 50.1% of the employers, and 48.4% of the legislators--reported that mastery in this area was very important. However, less than half (41.9%) of the students felt that this competency was very important, and 39.5% thought that it was important. Although none of the students designated any of the other seven competencies under government and law as somewhat important or not important, 15.7% listed this competency as only somewhat important and 2.9% as not important.

A majority of the respondents designated applying for various governmental licenses and understanding the circumstances for which they are needed as either very important or important. Students gave this item the highest rating of all the competencies, with 48.4% listing it as very important. Of the adult groups, 54.6% of the parents, 34.5% of the teachers, 37% of the administrators, 38.9% of the board members, 34.2% of the employers, and 38.7% of the legislators thought this competency was very important.

Identifying the governmental agency responsible for servicing

individual and community needs was considered the least important by the adult respondents. Although the majority of these respondents believed this competency to be very important or important, a significant number in each group--26.2% of the parents, 21.8% of the teachers, 19.8% of the administrators, 27.8% of the board members, 34.7% of the employers, and 16.1% of the legislators--indicated that mastery of this competency was only somewhat important. Of the students, 62.1% listed it as important, and 37.9%, as very important.

In general, fewer respondents gave the competencies associated with specific skills needed by citizens to cope effectively with governmental forms and regulations a very important rating. However, two of these competencies--using income tax tables to calculate tax rates and associating words and symbols encountered in the area of government and law with their meanings--were considered as either very important or important by the majority of the respondents.

Using income tax tables to calculate tax rates was listed by 82.8% of the parents, 83.5% of the teachers, 78.3% of the administrators, 75% of the board members, 68.5% of the employers, and 64.5% of the legislators as very important or important. The students believed this competency to be more important than the adult respondents, with 100% listing it as very important or important. It is interesting to note that more than one third (35.5%) of the legislators, the largest percentage in any group, believed that this competency was only somewhat important.

Associating words and symbols encountered in the areas of government and law with their meanings was also considered very important or

important by the majority of the respondents. Of the adult respondents, 78.2% of the parents, 84.4% of the teachers, 88.9% of the administrators, 80.5% of the board members, 74% of the employers, and 74.2% of the legislators believed this competency to be very important or important. Again, 100% of the students believed this competency to be very important or important.

The two competencies concerned with using interest tables and rates on federal savings bonds and on city bonds to calculate amounts of interest at various dates after purchase received the lowest ratings from all groups, although all respondents did indicate that computing federal bond rates was more important than computing city bond rates. Less than a third of the students believed these skills to be very important, and the remainder reported that they were important. In contrast, the majority of the adults listed both competencies as only somewhat important or not important.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 12.

TABLE 12

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Government and Law					
Associating words and symbols encountered in the area of government and law with their meanings.	37.5	62.5	0	0	N=1547
Registering to vote and following established voting procedures.	47.9	52.1	0	0	N=1653
Applying for licenses (marriage, animal, business, driver's, etc.) and understanding the circumstances in which they are needed.	48.4	51.6	0	0	N=1573
Identifying the government agency responsible for servicing individual and community needs.	37.9	62.1	0	0	N=1450
Using government savings bond payment tables to determine the worth of bonds at various dates after purchase.	31.9	68.1	0	0	N=1130
Using various interest rates on city bonds to calculate amounts of interest at various dates after purchase.	25.6	74.4	0	0	N=1200
Using income tax tables to calculate tax rates for various amounts of earnings and numbers of dependents.	45.5	54.5	0	0	N=1550
Understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life.	41.9	39.5	15.7	2.9	N=1902

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
26.5	51.7	21.8	0	N=238	35.2	49.2	14.8	0.8	N=122
78.3	17.5	4.2	0	N=240	62.1	33.9	3.2	0.8	N=124
54.6	35.8	9.2	0.4	N=240	34.5	45.4	16.8	3.4	N=119
21.9	51.5	26.2	0.4	N=237	30.3	46.2	21.8	1.7	N=119
10.0	31.8	45.2	13.0	N=239	13.9	24.3	48.7	13.0	N=115
5.5	31.9	48.1	14.5	N=235	9.6	27.0	40.0	23.5	N=115
37.0	45.8	15.5	1.7	N=238	38.0	45.5	14.0	1.7	N=121
62.6	33.2	4.2	0	N=238	51.2	43.1	5.7	0	N=123

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
30.9	58.0	11.1	0	N=81	22.2	58.3	19.4	0	N=36
64.6	35.4	0	0	N=82	75.7	24.3	0	0	N=37
37.0	43.2	17.3	2.5	N=75	38.9	52.8	8.3	0	N=36
25.9	51.9	19.8	2.5	N=81	13.9	58.3	27.8	0	N=36
6.3	22.8	51.9	19.0	N=79	5.7	25.7	65.7	2.9	N=35
2.6	28.2	47.4	21.8	N=78	5.7	25.7	48.6	20.0	N=35
27.7	50.6	20.5	1.2	N=83	30.6	44.4	25.0	0	N=36
56.6	36.1	7.2	0	N=83	54.1	43.2	2.7	0	N=37

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Important %	N
23.3	50.7	23.3	2.7	N=73	29.0	45.2	25.8	0	N=31
61.6	31.5	6.8	0	N=73	67.7	32.3	0	0	N=31
34.2	43.8	20.5	1.4	N=73	38.7	45.2	16.1	0	N=31
15.3	45.8	34.7	4.2	N=72	22.6	58.1	16.1	3.2	N=31
4.2	25.0	48.6	22.2	N=72	9.7	16.1	58.1	16.1	N=31
4.2	21.1	52.1	22.5	N=71	0	19.4	74.5	16.1	N=31
21.9	46.6	24.7	6.8	N=73	16.1	48.4	35.5	0	N=31
50.1	30.6	18.1	1.4	N=72	48.4	38.7	12.9	0	N=31

In addition, students, teachers, administrators, and board members were asked to designate which of these eight tasks should be taught in school. There was no specific competency which a majority in each group believed should be included in the curriculum, except for a majority of the administrators who listed registering to vote and following established voting procedures and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by the law as competencies that should be taught in school. The four groups were also asked if any of these tasks were now taught in their schools and, if so, whether the focus was major or minor. Very few of the respondents specified a particular task, and the majority of the respondents reported that, when these tasks were taught, the focus was minor.

Parents, employers, and legislators were asked if these tasks should be included in school curriculums and to designate which one. The vast majority--94.5% of the parents, 86.4% of the employers, and 93.3% of the legislators--responded that the government and law competencies should be taught in school. However, there was no significant agreement among the groups as to which specific tasks should be taught. The three groups were also asked if they thought that the teaching of these tasks should have a major or a minor focus. Legislators were evenly divided. A majority of the employers reported that the focus should be major, and a majority of the parents that the focus should be minor.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 13.

TABLE 13

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Government and Law

	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Associating words and symbols encountered in the area of government and law with their meanings.	29.7	38.2	43.0	37.2
Registering to vote and following established voting procedures.	33.1	41.7	51.2	41.9
Applying for licenses (marriage, animal, business, driver's, etc.) and understanding the circumstances in which they are needed.	32.3	36.1	44.2	41.9
Identifying the government agency responsible for servicing individual and community needs.	28.8	38.2	38.4	37.2
Using government savings bond payment tables to determine the worth of bonds at various dates after purchase.	23.3	28.5	24.4	25.6
Using various interest rates on city bonds to calculate amounts of interest at various dates after purchase.	24.0	26.4	23.3	25.6
Using income tax tables to calculate tax rates for various amounts of earnings and numbers of dependents.	34.2	45.8	38.4	32.6
Understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life.	36.0	42.4	52.3	39.5

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should the above tasks be taught in school?	94.5	5.5	86.4	13.6	93.3	6.7

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Should these tasks be a major focus of teaching or a minor one?	45.5	54.5	51.1	48.9	50.0	50.0

Health

Eight competencies were included under this category:

1. reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of health, such as communicable diseases, nutrition, food preparation, home safety, first aid, and danger symbols;
2. reading and understanding a first-aid manual;
3. selecting the most-balanced meal;
4. matching the names of diseases with their symptoms;
5. using information gathered from the media to describe ecological problems;
6. using a calorie chart;
7. reading and understanding pamphlets describing common diseases found in household pets; and
8. reading and understanding pamphlets on pest control.

A vast majority of the respondents in each group--87% of the students, 88.9% of the parents, 88.6% of the teachers, 92.4% of the administrators, 92.4% of the board members, 91.9% of the employers, and 86.7% of the legislators--listed reading and interpreting words, pictures and diagrams that describe various areas of health as either very important or important.

Reading and understanding a first-aid manual and selecting the most-balanced meal were also listed as very important or important by a vast majority of the respondents: 78.4% of the students, 84.5% of the parents, 84.3% of the teachers, 86.6% of the administrators, 73.7% of the board members, 82.2% of the employers, and 77.4% of the legislators believed that the former was very important or important,

and 69.5% of the students, 78.5% of the parents, 80.9% of the teachers, 85.7% of the administrators, 87.1% of the board members, 63% of the employers, and 64.6% of the legislators, that the latter was very important.

With the exception of legislators, a majority in each group--74.7% of the students, 56.6% of the parents, 73.9% of the teachers, 60% of the administrators, 53.9% of the board members, and 52.1% of the employers--believed that matching the names of diseases with their symptoms was also very important or important. In contrast, 61.3% of the legislators listed this competency as somewhat important or not important.

Using information gathered from the media to describe ecological problems was listed by 52.8% of the students, 65.8% of the teachers, 57% of the administrators, and 54% of the board members as very important or important. In contrast, a majority of the parents, employers, and legislators--58.7%, 72.6%, and 58.1%, respectively--believed this competency to be somewhat important or not important.

A majority of the teachers and administrators--60.1% and 58%, respectively--indicated that using a calorie chart effectively was very important or important, whereas the majority of the other respondents--55.3% of the students, 63.5% of the parents, 61.5% of the board members, 68.5% of the employers, and 67.8% of the legislators--indicated that it was somewhat important or not important.

Reading and understanding pamphlets describing common diseases found in household pets was listed by 50.2% of the students and 76.7% of the legislators as very important or important, whereas the majority of the

other respondents--72.6% of the parents, 59.1% of the teachers, 68.8% of the administrators, 78.4% of the board members, and 83.6% of the employers--indicated that this competency was somewhat important or not important.

The majority of the respondents--61.7% of the students, 68.4% of the parents, 50.9% of the teachers, 64.1% of the administrators, 69.5% of the board members, 78.1% of the employers, and 74.2% of the legislators--indicated that reading and understanding pamphlets on pest control was somewhat important or not important.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 14.

TABLE 14

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Health					
Reading and interpreting words, pictures and diagrams that describe various areas of health, such as communicable diseases, nutrition, food preparation, home safety, first aid, danger and warning symbols.	50.8	36.2	11.1	1.9	N=2093
Selecting the most balanced meal from among a group of sample meals.	26.4	43.1	25.5	5.0	N=2119
Using a calorie counting chart to calculate the number of calories in various sample menus.	13.1	31.6	40.5	14.8	N=2092
Matching the names of diseases with their symptoms.	33.6	41.1	20.8	4.5	N=2107
Reading a standard first aid manual and noting the important points.	37.6	40.8	18.6	3.0	N=2084
Using newspaper and magazine articles and notes taken from television and radio broadcasts, to describe ecological problems.	15.9	36.9	36.8	10.4	N=2077
Reading pamphlets on pest control and noting the main ideas.	10.5	27.9	38.5	23.2	N=2057
Reading pamphlets describing common diseases found in household pets and noting the main ideas.	15.8	34.4	36.8	13.0	N=2016

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
49.2	39.7	10.7	0.4	N=242	44.3	44.3	10.7	0.8	N=122
25.6	52.9	21.1	0.4	N=242	34.1	46.8	18.3	0.8	N=126
6.6	29.9	56.0	7.5	N=241	21.1	39.0	35.8	4.1	N=123
15.4	41.2	38.7	4.6	N=240	31.9	42.0	21.0	5.0	N=119
34.3	50.2	14.6	0.8	N=239	42.6	41.7	14.8	0.9	N=115
6.3	35.0	48.7	10.0	N=240	22.5	43.3	29.2	5.0	N=120
4.6	27.1	59.2	9.2	N=240	14.0	35.1	36.0	14.9	N=114
4.2	23.2	55.7	16.9	N=237	13.6	27.3	37.3	21.8	N=110

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
57.0	35.4	7.6	0	N=79	46.2	46.2	7.7	0	N=38
33.3	52.4	14.3	0	N=84	17.9	69.2	12.8	0	N=39
12.3	45.7	39.5	2.5	N=81	0	38.5	56.4	5.1	N=39
16.2	43.8	36.2	3.7	N=80	7.7	46.2	43.6	2.6	N=39
36.6	50.0	13.4	0	N=82	21.1	52.6	23.7	2.6	N=38
11.4	45.6	40.5	2.5	N=79	10.8	43.2	43.2	2.7	N=37
9.0	26.9	55.1	9.0	N=78	5.6	25.0	52.8	16.7	N=36
7.8	23.4	50.6	18.2	N=77	2.7	18.9	54.1	24.3	N=37

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
35.1	56.8	8.1	0	N=74	40.0	46.7	13.3	0	N=30
23.3	39.7	32.9	4.1	N=73	19.4	45.2	35.5	0	N=31
5.5	26.0	54.8	13.7	N=73	16.1	16.1	61.3	6.5	N=31
19.2	32.9	38.4	9.6	N=73	9.7	29.0	51.6	9.7	N=31
38.4	43.8	17.8	0	N=73	25.8	51.6	16.1	6.5	N=31
6.8	20.5	53.4	19.2	N=73	9.7	32.3	51.6	6.5	N=31
2.7	19.2	56.2	21.9	N=73	9.7	16.1	54.8	19.4	N=31
1.4	15.1	56.2	27.4	N=73	16.7	60.0	23.3	0	N=30

Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were also asked to designate which of the eight tasks should be included in the school curriculum. There was no specific competency under the category of health which a majority of the students, teachers, and board members thought should be taught in school, although 51.2% of the administrators indicated that selecting a balanced meal should be taught in school. These four groups were also asked if any of these tasks were now taught in school and, if so, whether the focus was major or minor. Very few of the respondents specified a particular competency, and the majority of the respondents reported that, when these tasks were taught in school, the focus was minor.

Parents, employers, and legislators were asked to indicate if these tasks should be taught in school and to designate which ones. A vast majority of the respondents--93.3% of the parents, 76.9% of the employers, and 96.3% of the legislators--responded that these tasks should be taught in school, but there was no significant agreement as to which specific tasks should be included in the curriculum. These three groups were also asked if they thought that the teaching of these tasks should have a major or a minor focus. The majority replied that the focus should be minor.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 15.

TABLE 15

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Health

	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Reading and interpreting words, pictures and diagrams that describe various areas of health, such as communicable diseases, nutrition, food preparation, home safety, first aid, danger and warning symbols.	26.9	43.1	50.0	37.2
Selecting the most balanced meal from among a group of sample meals.	34.0	43.1	51.2	34.9
Using a calorie counting chart to calculate the number of calories in various sample menus.	25.4	36.1	38.4	30.2
Matching the names of diseases with their symptoms.	36.6	41.0	45.3	30.2
Reading a standard first aid manual and noting the important points.	38.8	41.0	51.2	32.6
Using newspaper and magazine articles and notes taken from television and radio broadcasts, to describe ecological problems.	26.2	37.5	44.2	30.2
Reading pamphlets on pest control and noting the main ideas.	21.7	29.2	33.7	23.3
Reading pamphlets describing common diseases found in household pets and noting the main ideas.	26.3	27.8	30.2	18.6

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should the above tasks be taught in school?	93.3	6.7	76.9	23.1	96.3	3.7

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Should these tasks be a major focus of teaching or a minor one?	30.9	68.1	26.5	73.5	37.5	62.5

Consumer Economics

Sixteen competencies were included under this category. Three related to reading, understanding, and making use of consumer information:

1. reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of consumer economics, such as packaged food labels, clothing labels, and appliance labels;

2. reading and interpreting lease agreements, insurance policies, guarantees, contracts, and deposits; and

3. making use of the information provided within consumer guides.

The other thirteen competencies focused on specific skills the consumer needs to cope effectively with finances:

1. calculating per unit prices and comparing per unit prices for different brands;

2. using menus to select various kinds of food and to calculate the total price of a meal for various numbers of people;

3. using samples of sales tags to calculate the total cost of items after sales taxes have been computed and added in;

4. selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of automobiles;

5. selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of homes and furnishings;

6. choosing the type of life insurance best suited to an individual's needs and resources;

7. selecting the health insurance plans, rates, and benefits best suited to an individual's needs and resources;

8. using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks;

9. reconciling checking debits and credits to calculate the balance in a checking account;

10. computing interest rates charged on various types of loans;

11. selecting the best loan according to needs;

12. using the instructions that come with income tax forms to fill out sample federal and state returns; and

13. using various amounts of income and lists of needs and luxuries to prepare weekly, monthly, and yearly budgets.

There was a general consensus among the respondents that the competencies related to reading, understanding, and making use of consumer information were very important or important. Reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of consumer economics and reading and interpreting lease agreements, insurance policies, etc. were considered very important or important by a majority of the respondents in each group: 70.6% of the students, 72.6% of the parents, 80% of the teachers, 91.6% of the administrators, 81.6% of the board members, 64.4% of the employers, and 74.2% of the legislators believed that the first competency was very important or important, and 87.6% of the students, 86.5% of the parents, 82.3% of the teachers, 86.7% of the administrators, 63.1% of the board members, 83.3% of the employers, and 77.5% of the legislators, that the second competency was very important or important. Making use of the information provided within consumer guides was listed by 60.8% of the students, 75.6% of the

teachers, 75.6% of the administrators, 58.3% of the board members, and 58.1% of the legislators as very important or important. However, 55% of the employers rated this competency as somewhat important or not important, and the parents were evenly divided: 50% listed it as very important or important,50% as somewhat important or not important.

The thirteen competencies that focused on the specific skills a consumer needs to cope effectively with finances were also considered to be very important or important by a majority of the respondents. Calculating per unit prices and comparing per unit prices for different brands was listed as very important or important by 65.1% of the students, 68.1% of the parents, 85.9% of the teachers, 89.4% of the administrators, 81.6% of the board members, 57.1% of the employers, and 70.9% of the legislators. Using menus to select various kinds of food and to calculate the price of a meal for a number of people was the only competency which a majority in each group--67.8% of the students, 75% of the parents, 55.8% of the teachers, 61.8% of the administrators, 64.9% of the board members, 87.3% of the employers, and 80.6% of the legislators--listed as somewhat important or not important. However, 56.4% of the parents, 64.8% of the employers, and 64.5% of the legislators also believed that using samples of sales tags to calculate the total cost of items after sales taxes have been computed and added in was somewhat important or not important. A majority in each of the other groups--51% of the students, 60.8% of the teachers, 64.6% of the administrators, and 51.3% of the board members--listed this competency as very important or important.

The four skills relating to choosing various kinds of insurance were also considered to be very important or important by a majority of the respondents. Selecting the most appropriate automobile insurance was listed as very important or important by 81% of the students, 59.9% of the parents, 80.3% of the teachers, 67.8% of the administrators, 58.6% of the employers, and 61.3% of the legislators. Board members, however, were evenly divided: 50% listed this competency as very important or important and 50% as somewhat important or not important. Selecting the most appropriate home insurance was also considered very important or important by 79.5% of the students, 60.6% of the parents, 79% of the teachers, 69.9% of the administrators, 64.8% of the employers, and 51.6% of the legislators. Again, board members were evenly divided: 50% listed this competency as very important or important and 50% as somewhat important or not important. Choosing the most appropriate life insurance and choosing the most appropriate health insurance were considered very important or important by a majority in each group: 84.1% of the students, 66% of the parents, 82.4% of the teachers, 66.3% of the administrators, 61.1% of the board members, 72.2% of the employers, and 54.8% of the legislators rated the first competency as very important or important; and 84% of the students, 71% of the parents, 78.2% of the teachers, 71.6% of the administrators, 61.1% of the board members, 71.2% of the employers, and 71% of the legislators, the second competency as very important or important.

The four competencies relating to the consumer's banking needs

were also listed as very important or important by the majority of the respondents. Using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks was listed as very important or important by 61.9% of the students, 76.6% of the parents, 89.1% of the teachers, 89.2% of the administrators, 86.8% of the board members, 69.4% of the employers, and 74.2% of the legislators. Reconciling checking debits and credits to calculate the balance in a checking account also received a very high rating by the majority of respondents: 77.8% of the students, 89.1% of the parents, 91.3% of the teachers, 92.8% of the administrators, 89.5% of the board members, 83.6% of the employers, and 83.9% of the legislators listed this competency as very important or important.

Computing interest rates charged on various types of loans and selecting the best loan according to needs were considered by a majority in each group as important competencies: 75.5% of the students, 79.1% of the parents, 83.4% of the teachers, 91.2% of the administrators, 78.9% of the board members, 72.6% of the employers, and 74.2% of the legislators indicated that the first competency was very important or important, and 78.8% of the students, 79.6% of the parents, 82.8% of the teachers, 90% of the administrators, 83.8% of the board members, 83.6% of the employers, and 80.6% of the legislators indicated that the second competency was very important or important.

Using the instructions that come with income tax forms to fill out sample federal and state returns was listed by a majority in each group--88.1% of the students, 89.6% of the parents, 88.8% of the teachers, 87.4% of the administrators, 73.7% of the board members, 80.9% of the employers,

74.2% of the legislators--as a very important or important competency.

Using various amounts of income and lists of needs and luxuries to prepare weekly, monthly, and yearly budgets received a high rating by a vast majority of the respondents: 80.2% of the students, 85.9% of the parents, 87.7% of the teachers, 91.1% of the administrators, 81.6% of the board members, 79.5% of the employers, and 87.1% of the legislators rated this competency as very important or important.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 16.

TABLE 16

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Consumer Economics					
Reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of consumer economics, such as packaged food labels, clothing labels, and appliance labels.	27.7	42.9	25.1	4.2	N=2192
Making use of the information provided within consumer guides.	19.8	41.0	33.9	5.3	N=2169
Calculating per unit prices and comparing per unit prices for different brands.	21.6	43.5	29.2	5.7	N=2171
Using menus obtained from restaurants to read the names of various kinds of food and to calculate the total price of a meal for various numbers of people.	8.6	23.6	40.0	27.8	N=2170
Reading and interpreting lease agreements, insurance policies, guarantees, contracts and deposits.	55.2	32.4	10.5	1.9	N=2185
Using samples of sales tags to calculate the total cost of items after sales taxes have been computed and added in.	15.8	35.2	37.8	11.3	N=2150
Selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of automobiles.	42.9	38.1	15.5	3.6	N=2168
Selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of homes and furnishings.	41.3	38.2	16.9	3.6	N=2166
Choosing the type of life insurance rates and values best suited to an individual's needs and resources.	50.8	33.3	12.7	3.2	N=2165

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
24.1	48.5	25.7	1.7	N=237	39.2	40.8	18.5	1.5	N=130
8.2	41.8	43.1	6.9	N=232	26.8	48.8	22.8	1.6	N=123
20.2	47.9	29.0	2.9	N=238	33.1	52.8	13.4	0.2	N=127
4.3	20.7	49.6	25.4	N=232	13.9	30.3	36.9	18.9	N=122
48.1	38.4	13.1	0.4	N=237	40.8	41.5	15.4	2.3	N=130
7.7	35.9	47.4	9.0	N=234	15.8	45.0	32.5	6.7	N=120
19.7	40.2	33.3	6.8	N=234	33.6	46.7	14.8	4.9	N=122
22.0	38.6	36.0	3.4	N=236	27.4	51.6	14.5	6.5	N=124
24.7	41.3	27.7	6.4	N=235	30.4	52.0	13.6	4.0	N=125

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important %**	N
44.0	47.6	6.0	2.4	N=84	21.1	60.5	15.8	2.6	N=38
20.7	54.9	23.2	1.2	N=82	13.9	44.4	36.1	5.6	N=36
29.4	60.0	9.4	1.2	N=85	18.4	63.2	18.4	0	N=38
5.3	32.9	52.6	9.2	N=76	8.1	27.0	54.1	10.8	N=37
30.1	56.6	12.0	1.2	N=83	26.3	36.8	34.2	2.6	N=38
14.6	50.0	34.1	1.2	N=82	8.1	43.2	43.2	5.4	N=37
19.0	48.8	31.0	1.2	N=84	11.1	38.9	47.2	2.8	N=36
20.5	49.4	28.9	1.2	N=83	10.5	39.5	47.4	2.6	N=38
16.9	49.4	31.3	2.4	N=83	13.9	47.2	36.1	2.8	N=36

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
23.3	41.1	32.9	2.7	N=73	29.0	45.2	25.8	0	N=31
4.2	40.8	46.5	8.5	N=71	12.9	45.2	38.7	3.2	N=31
11.4	45.7	37.1	5.7	N=70	16.1	54.8	29.0	0	N=31
2.8	9.9	38.0	49.3	N=71	6.5	12.9	67.7	12.9	N=31
34.7	48.6	16.7	0	N=72	19.4	58.1	22.6	0	N=31
7.0	28.2	46.5	18.3	N=71	6.5	29.0	61.3	3.2	N=31
14.3	44.3	37.1	4.3	N=70	22.6	38.7	38.7	0	N=31
15.5	49.3	32.4	2.8	N=71	22.6	29.0	48.4	0	N=31
19.4	52.8	25.0	2.8	N=72	25.8	29.0	45.2	0	N=31

TABLE 16
(Continued)

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Consumer Economics					
Selecting the health insurance plans, rates, and benefits best suited to an individual's needs and resources.	50.7	33.3	13.4	2.6	N=2156
Using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks.	23.1	38.8	28.3	9.7	N=2161
Reconciling checking deposits and checks written to calculate the balance in a checking account.	35.3	42.5	18.6	3.6	N=2167
Computing interest rates charged on various types of loans.	28.8	46.7	21.2	3.3	N=2134
Selecting the best loan according to needs, given rates of interest and conditions of various loans.	32.1	46.7	17.9	3.4	N=2119
Using the instructions that come with income tax forms to fill out sample federal and state returns.	52.6	35.5	9.3	2.7	N=2129
Using various amounts of income and lists of needs and luxuries to prepare weekly, monthly, and yearly budgets.	37.5	42.7	16.3	3.6	N=2096

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
27.8	43.2	26.1	3.0	N=234	30.6	47.6	16.1	5.6	N=124
36.2	40.4	20.8	2.5	N=240	51.9	37.2	10.1	0.8	N=129
48.5	40.6	10.0	0.8	N=239	50.4	40.9	7.9	0.8	N=127
43.0	36.1	20.5	0.4	N=244	42.1	41.3	11.9	4.8	N=126
43.9	35.7	20.1	0.4	N=244	38.5	44.3	11.5	5.7	N=122
51.2	38.4	9.5	0.8	N=242	55.2	33.6	8.8	2.4	N=125
46.9	39.0	13.3	0.8	N=241	48.4	39.3	9.8	2.5	N=122

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
23.5	48.1	25.9	2.5	N=81	16.7	44.4	33.3	5.6	N=36
41.0	48.2	7.2	3.6	N=83	44.7	42.1	10.5	2.6	N=38
47.0	45.8	6.0	1.2	N=83	39.5	50.0	7.9	2.6	N=38
30.0	61.2	6.3	2.5	N=80	34.2	44.7	21.1	0	N=38
37.5	52.5	8.7	1.2	N=80	29.7	54.1	16.2	0	N=37
48.7	38.7	10.0	2.5	N=80	31.6	42.1	23.7	2.6	N=38
40.5	50.6	7.6	1.3	N=79	26.3	55.3	18.4	0	N=38

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
23.3	47.9	26.0	2.7	N=73	32.3	38.7	29.0	0	N=31
31.9	37.5	23.6	6.9	N=72	32.3	41.9	25.8	0	N=31
41.1	42.5	15.1	1.4	N=73	48.4	35.5	16.1	0	N=31
26.0	46.6	19.2	8.2	N=73	32.3	41.9	25.8	0	N=31
32.9	50.7	15.1	1.4	N=73	41.9	38.7	19.4	0	N=31
28.8	52.1	15.1	4.1	N=73	19.4	54.8	25.8	0	N=31
38.4	41.1	19.2	1.4	N=73	29.0	58.1	12.9	0	N=31

Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were also asked to designate which of the sixteen competencies should be included in the school curriculum. A majority of the administrators indicated that preparing budgets was a competency that should be taught in school. In no case did a majority of students, teachers, and board members single out any specific task as one that should be taught in school, although more than 40% of the teachers and administrators believed that all of the competencies included under consumer economics should be included in the school curriculum. More than 40% of the students also believed that filling out tax forms, selecting bank loans, and preparing budgets were important tasks that should be taught in school. The four groups were also asked if any of these tasks were now taught in school and, if so, whether the focus was major or minor. Very few of the respondents specified a particular competency, and the majority of the respondents reported that, when these tasks were taught in school, the focus was minor.

Parents, employers, and legislators were also asked if these competencies should be taught in school and to specify which ones. A vast majority--95.7% of the parents, 91.4% of the employers, and 96.7% of the legislators--responded that these competencies should be taught in school, but there was no significant agreement as to which specific tasks should be included in the curriculum. These three groups were also asked if they thought that the teaching of these competencies should have a major or a minor focus, and a majority of the parents and employers replied that the focus should be minor. However, a

majority of the legislators indicated that the focus should be major.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 17.

TABLE 17

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Consumer Economics	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of consumer economics, such as packaged food labels, clothing labels, and appliance labels.	22.1	44.4	50.0	41.9
Reading and interpreting lease agreements, insurance policies, guarantees, contracts and deposits.	26.4	42.4	46.5	44.2
Calculating per unit prices and comparing per unit prices for different brands.	21.9	45.8	47.7	41.9
Using menus obtained from restaurants to read the names of various kinds of food and to calculate the total price of a meal for various numbers of people.	20.2	38.2	38.4	27.9
Making use of the information provided within consumer guides.	20.8	41.7	45.3	34.9
Using samples of sales tags to calculate the total cost of items after sales taxes have been computed and added in.	20.3	38.9	44.2	37.2
Selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of automobiles.	25.0	41.0	45.3	37.2
Selecting the type and amount of insurance coverage best suited to different kinds of homes and furnishings.	24.8	40.3	45.3	37.2
Choosing the type of life insurance rates and values best suited to an individual's needs and resources.	26.0	42.4	40.7	37.2
Selecting the health insurance plans, rates, and benefits best suited to an individual's needs and resources.	25.9	45.1	41.9	39.5
Using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks.	21.7	45.8	48.8	39.5

TABLE 17
(Continued)
Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Consumer Economics	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Reconciling checking deposits and checks written to calculate the balance in a checking account.	23.9	45.1	47.7	48.8
Computing interest rates charged on various types of loans.	39.6	46.5	45.3	37.2
Selecting the best loan according to needs, given rates of interest and condition of various loans.	42.5	43.1	45.3	37.2
Using the instructions that come with income tax forms to fill out sample federal and state returns.	48.7	47.9	43.0	37.2
Using various amounts of income and lists of needs and luxuries to prepare weekly, monthly, and yearly budgets.	44.0	45.8	54.7	41.9

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should the above tasks be taught in school?	95.7	3.4	91.4	8.6	96.7	3.3

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Should these tasks be a major focus of teaching or a minor one?	38.2	61.8	39.7	60.3	56.5	43.5

Community Resources

Thirteen competencies were included under this category. Five related directly to understanding the functions of and utilizing community agencies:

1. locating and using library facilities available in the community;
2. identifying and locating sources of community information;
3. matching names of community agencies with their services;
4. writing letters to community agencies requesting information; and
5. reading and understanding material obtained from community agencies.

The remaining eight competencies focused on specific tasks relating to computing time, using transportation schedules and information directories, and writing for travel information:

6. using a clock correctly;
7. calculating differences in time in days, months, and years;
8. associating commonly-used words and signs with pictures that describe transportation modes;
9. using city maps as guides to highways, streets, buildings, parks, and rivers;
10. using transportation schedules to calculate distances, time, and fares;
11. using the yellow pages to find the telephone numbers of bus, train, ship, and airline companies;
12. writing letters to travel agencies, and travel associations for travel information; and
13. writing letters to obtain travel accommodations.

Of the thirteen competencies listed under the category of community resources, locating and using library facilities was given the highest rating by the respondents. A majority in each group--69.5% of the students, 86.3% of the parents, 82.3% of the teachers, 79.7% of the administrators, 83.7% of the board members, 79.1% of the employers, and 77.4% of the legislators--designated this task as very important or important.

With respect to identifying and locating sources of community information, 60.4% of the students, 67.5% of the parents, 64.6% of the teachers, 65% of the administrators, 61.1% of the board members, and 51.6% of the legislators also responded that this competency was either very important or important. In contrast, 55.5% of the employers felt that this competency was only somewhat important or not important. A majority of the respondents--51.3% of the students, 53.6% of the parents, 57.2% of the teachers, 58.5% of the administrators, 50% of the board members, and 51.6% of the legislators--also believed that matching names of community agencies with their services was either very important or important. Again, a majority of the employers--64.8%--felt that this task was only somewhat important or not important.

Of the five tasks concerned with community agencies, writing letters to request information and reading and understanding material obtained from community agencies received the lowest ratings of importance by the respondents. A slight majority of the students, parents, teachers, administrators, and board members--55.9%, 57.6%, 52.3%, 52%, and 54.3%, respectively--felt that the former task was either very important or

important, whereas a majority of the employers and legislators--63.4% and 51.6%, respectively--considered this task as only somewhat important or not important. The latter competency was rated by 55.2% of the parents, 51.4% of the teachers, 57.2% of the board members, and 54.8% of the legislators as either very important or important; however, 53.5% of the students, 51.4% of the administrators, and 68.6% of the employers rated this task as only somewhat important or not important.

The two tasks related to computing time received high ratings of importance by all respondents. A majority in each group--54.1% of the students, 81.7% of the parents, 69.7% of the teachers, 83.4% of the administrators, 86.8% of the board members, 58.5% of the employers, and 77.4% of the legislators--indicated that using a clock correctly was either very important or important. Calculating differences in time in days, months, and years was also rated by a majority in each group--51.3% of the students, 76.6% of the parents, 70.5% of the teachers, 70.7% of the administrators, 81.6% of the board members, 54.1% of the employers, and 58% of the legislators--as either very important or important.

Associating commonly-used words and signs with pictures that describe transportation modes was designated as very important or important by 61.1% of the students, 70.1% of the parents, 67.3% of the teachers, 75% of the administrators, 75.6% of the board members, 50% of the employers and 77.4% of the legislators. Using city maps as guides to highways, streets, buildings, parks and rivers was also rated as very important or important by 66% of the students, 73.8% of the parents, 58.9% of the

teachers, 81.4% of the administrators, 83.4% of the board members, 48.7% of the employers, and 70.9% of the legislators.

With the exception of employers, a majority of each group--54.1% of the students, 66.5% of the parents, 57.2% of the teachers, 58.9% of the administrators, 61.1% of the board members, and 51.6% of the legislators--felt that using transportation schedules to calculate distances, time and fares was very important or important. However, 63.9% of the employers felt that this task was somewhat important or not important. Using the yellow pages to find the telephone numbers of bus, train, ship, and airline companies, travel agencies and travel associations was designated as very important or important by 55.2% of the students, 57% of the parents, 54.9% of the teachers, 59.4% of the administrators, and 69.4% of the board members. Two groups--51.6% of the legislators and 62.9% of the employers--felt that this task was only somewhat important or not important.

The two competencies concerned with travel arrangements and accommodations received the lowest ratings of all groups. Although 57.4% of the students, 52.2% of the parents, and 51.3% of the board members felt that writing letters to travel agencies for travel information was very important or important, 58.6% of the teachers, 57% of the administrators, 69.4% of the employers, and 61.3% of the legislators felt that this task was only somewhat important or not important. Writing letters to obtain travel accommodations was designated as very important or important by 50.2% of the students, and as somewhat important or not important by 50.7% of the parents, 55.8% of the teachers, 63.4% of the administrators, 59.4% of the board members, 69% of the employers, and 54.8% of the

legislators.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 18.

TABLE 18

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
Community Resources					
Matching the name of the agency in the community with the desired services or functions.	12.6	38.7	36.7	12.0	N=2057
Identifying and locating sources of community information.	14.3	46.1	32.6	7.0	N=2050
Locating and using the library facilities available in the community.	25.7	43.8	26.2	4.3	N=2043
Writing a letter to a community agency requesting written information regarding the services provided.	15.2	40.7	34.0	10.0	N=2043
Reading the material obtained from a community agency and noting the main ideas.	11.7	34.8	40.7	12.8	N=2041
Associating commonly used words and signs with pictures that describe transportation modes, such as location of bus, train, plane; Stop, Go, No Smoking, left, right, North, South, etc.	26.8	34.3	25.5	13.4	N=2044
Using a clock to note various times in hours, minutes and seconds with reference to day and night.	25.1	29.0	26.6	19.3	N=2041
Using subtraction and addition to calculate differences in time in years, months and days.	20.1	31.2	31.8	16.9	N=2034
Using transportation schedules to calculate distances, time and fares.	18.1	36.0	33.3	12.7	N=2033

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important % **	Important %**	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important %**	N	Very Important %**	Important %**	Somewhat Important %**	Not Important %**	N
12.2	41.4	39.7	6.8	N=237	16.1	41.1	34.8	8.0	N=112
15.6	51.9	30.0	2.5	N=237	19.1	45.5	30.0	5.5	N=110
39.6	46.7	13.3	0.4	N=240	33.6	48.7	17.7	0	N=113
11.8	45.8	37.8	4.6	N=238	11.9	40.4	35.8	11.9	N=109
10.3	44.9	40.2	4.7	N=234	9.3	42.1	32.7	15.9	N=107
37.6	32.5	23.6	6.3	N=237	36.4	30.9	21.8	10.9	N=110
47.9	33.8	13.7	4.7	N=234	31.2	38.5	16.5	13.8	N=109
35.6	41.0	18.0	5.4	N=239	28.6	41.9	23.8	5.7	N=105
16.7	49.8	27.0	6.4	N=233	18.4	38.8	35.9	6.8	N=103

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
15.6	42.9	36.4	5.2	N=77	5.6	44.4	47.2	2.8	N=36
20.8	44.2	33.8	1.3	N=77	8.3	52.8	33.3	5.6	N=36
32.9	46.8	20.3	0	N=79	35.1	48.6	13.5	2.7	N=37
12.0	40.0	40.0	8.0	N=75	8.6	45.7	42.9	2.9	N=35
12.2	36.5	44.6	6.8	N=74	8.6	48.6	42.9	0	N=35
40.8	34.2	21.1	3.9	N=76	35.1	40.5	24.3	0	N=37
52.8	30.6	12.5	4.2	N=72	52.6	34.2	13.2	0	N=38
36.0	34.7	25.3	4.0	N=75	39.5	42.1	18.4	0	N=38
20.5	38.4	39.7	1.4	N=73	19.4	41.7	38.9	0	N=36

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	N
4.2	31.0	49.3	5.5	N=71	12.9	38.7	35.5	12.9	N=31
5.6	38.9	48.6	6.9	N=72	16.1	35.5	38.7	9.7	N=31
33.3	45.8	18.1	2.8	N=72	16.1	61.3	22.6	0	N=31
8.5	28.2	53.5	9.9	N=71	9.7	38.7	35.5	16.1	N=31
8.6	22.9	55.7	12.9	N=70	12.9	41.9	32.3	12.9	N=31
22.2	27.8	43.1	6.9	N=72	38.7	38.7	22.6	0	N=31
27.1	31.4	35.7	5.7	N=70	48.4	29.0	19.4	3.2	N=31
22.2	31.9	38.9	6.9	N=72	16.1	41.9	35.5	6.5	N=31
6.9	29.2	50.0	13.9	N=72	9.7	41.9	38.7	9.7	N=31

TABLE 18
(Continued)

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Importance of
Adult Functional Competencies*

	Students				
	Very Important %**	Important %**	Somewhat Important %**	Not Important %**	N
Community Resourses					
Using the yellow pages of a telephone book to list telephone numbers of bus, train, ship, and airline companies, travel agencies, and travel associations.	19.3	35.9	31.6	13.2	N=2024
Using a city map as a reference, to mark highways, streets, buildings, parks, rivers, etc.	26.7	39.3	26.1	7.9	N=2032
Writing in proper form and with correct grammar a letter to a tourist or travel agency requesting travel information.	22.1	35.3	29.2	13.5	N=2045
Writing in proper form and with correct grammar a letter to a hotel, motel, or camping ground to make overnight accommodations.	18.2	32.0	33.8	16.1	N=1918

* The above items indicating adult functional competencies were adapted with permission from the American College Testing Program, Adult Performance Level Program.

** Percentages were computed on the basis of those who responded to each item.

Parents					Teachers				
Very Important z**	Important z**	Somewhat Important z**	Not Important z**	N	Very Important z**	Important z**	Somewhat Important z**	Not Important z**	N
14.9	42.1	32.8	10.2	N=235	17.6	37.3	30.4	14.7	N=102
24.9	48.9	23.2	3.0	N=237	21.5	37.4	35.5	5.6	N=107
19.7	32.5	34.2	13.7	N=234	12.5	28.8	39.4	19.2	N=104
14.5	34.9	39.6	11.1	N=235	15.3	28.8	39.6	16.2	N=111

Administrators					Board Members				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
16.2	43.2	35.1	5.4	N=74	19.4	50.0	27.8	2.8	N=36
26.7	54.7	17.3	1.3	N=75	30.6	52.8	16.7	0	N=36
15.3	27.8	41.7	15.3	N=72	10.8	40.5	37.8	10.8	N=37
15.5	21.1	46.5	16.9	N=71	10.8	29.7	48.6	10.8	N=37

Employers					Legislators				
Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N	Very Important % **	Important % **	Somewhat Important % **	Not Important % **	N
7.1	30.0	40.0	22.9	N-70	9.7	38.7	41.9	9.7	N=31
5.6	43.1	43.1	8.3	N=72	16.1	54.8	22.6	6.5	N=31
8.3	22.2	44.4	25.0	N=72	12.9	25.8	38.7	22.6	N=31
4.2	26.8	46.5	22.5	N=71	19.4	25.8	38.7	16.1	N=31

Students, parents, administrators, and board members were also asked whether they believed any of these competencies should be taught in school. None of the thirteen competencies were designated by a majority in any group as a task that should be included in the school curriculum. However, more than one third of the teachers, administrators, and board members--36.1%, 43%, and 46.5%, respectively--did feel that locating and using library facilities was a task that should be included in the school curriculum. The four groups were also asked if any of these tasks were now taught in school and if so, whether the focus was major or minor. Very few of the respondents designated a particular competency, and the majority of the respondents reported that, when the tasks were taught in school, the focus was minor.

Parents, employers, and legislators were asked if these tasks should be taught in school and to specify which ones. A majority of the respondents--82.9% of the parents, 67.9% of the employers, and 85.7% of the legislators--answered affirmatively. There was, however, a lack of agreement among the respondents as to which tasks should be included in the curriculum. These three groups were also asked if they thought the teaching of these competencies should have a major or minor focus and a majority in each group indicated that the focus should be minor.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding these competencies, see Table 19.

TABLE 19

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Community Resources	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Matching the name of the agency in the community with the desired services or functions.	16.4	29.2	37.2	34.9
Identifying and locating sources of community information.	16.9	35.4	38.4	37.2
Locating and using the library facilities available in the community.	19.7	36.1	43.0	46.5
Writing a letter to a community agency requesting written information regarding the services provided.	16.9	28.5	30.2	25.6
Reading the material obtained from a community agency and noting the main ideas.	14.6	29.2	27.9	30.2
Associating commonly used words and signs with pictures that describe transportation modes, such as location of bus, train, plane; Stop, Go, No Smoking, left, right, North, South, etc.	17.7	33.3	36.0	41.9
Using a clock to note various times in hours, minutes and seconds with reference to day and night.	16.5	32.6	36.0	44.2
Using subtraction and addition to calculate differences in time in years, months and days.	16.1	31.3	39.5	39.5
Using transportation schedules to calculate distances, time and fares.	15.9	32.6	34.9	37.2
Using the yellow pages of a telephone book to list telephone numbers of bus, train, ship, and airline companies, travel agencies, and travel associations.	16.1	29.2	30.2	34.9
Using a city map as a reference, to mark highways, streets, buildings, parks, rivers, etc.	19.0	33.3	38.4	39.5
Writing in proper form and with correct grammar a letter to a tourist or travel agency requesting travel information.	16.2	26.4	27.9	30.2

TABLE 19
(Continued)

Respondent Opinions
Regarding the Teaching of Adult Functional Competencies

Community Resources	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Board Members
Writing in proper form and with correct grammar a letter to a hotel, motel, or camping ground to make overnight accommodations.	20.4	26.4	29.1	27.9

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should the above tasks be taught in school?	82.9	17.1	67.9	32.1	85.7	14.3

	Parents		Employers		Legislators	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Should these tasks be a major focus of teaching or a minor one?	23.1	76.9	26.8	73.2	25.0	75.0

Respondent Opinions Regarding Overall Approach to a Minimum Competency Program

The respondents were also asked to indicate which approach they would endorse in a minimum competency program, that is, would they prefer to see major emphasis given to the academic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic; an equal emphasis given to academic skills and the general areas of occupational knowledge, government and law, health, consumer economics, and community resources, or a major emphasis given to the general knowledge areas. The majority of the respondents in each group--72.6% of the students, 72.5% of the parents, 71.2% of the teachers, 61% of the administrators, 51.2% of the board members, 62.9% of the employers, and 79.3% of the legislators indicated that they would prefer school programs which gave an equal emphasis to academic skills and to general knowledge areas.

For a more complete report of respondent opinions regarding their preferences, see Table 20.

TABLE 20

Respondent Opinions
Regarding Overall Approach
to a Minimum Competency Program

	N=1778 Students %	N=229 Parents %	N=125 Teachers %
Which overall approach would you endorse in a minimum competency program?			
Major emphasis given to academic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic)	17.4	24.9	25.6
Equal emphasis given to academic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and general knowledge areas (consumer economics, government and law, occupation, health, and community resources)	72.6	72.5	71.2
Major emphasis given to general knowledge areas (consumer economics, government and law, occupation, health, and community resources)	10.0	2.6	3.2

N=82 Administrators %	N=36 Board Members %	N=70 Employers %	N=29 Legislators %
37.8	32.6	34.3	20.7
61.0	51.2	62.9	79.3
1.2	0	2.9	0

PART III

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

In light of the recent and varied efforts of many states to introduce minimum competency testing as a criterion for high school graduation and, in some cases, for grade promotion, this study primarily set out (1) to identify those competencies which various segments of the population believe to be important for functioning adults in our society, and (ii) to ascertain which competencies should be taught in the schools.

This study, conducted during the academic year 1977-78, involved 2,284 students, 245 parents, 144 teachers, 86 administrators, 43 board members, 75 employers, and 31 legislators.

In keeping with the purpose of the study, five main objectives were proposed: (1) to select a representative sample of students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, employers, and legislators to participate in the research effort; (2) to elicit relevant background information from each group of respondents; (3) to identify student problems in reading, writing, arithmetic, listening, and speaking; (4) to identify the key adult-functional competencies that each group considered important enough to be taught in secondary schools; and (5) to identify the most desirable approach for a minimum competency program.

Within the scope of the data collected for this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The first purpose of the project, to select a representative sample of students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, employers, and legislators to participate in this study, was achieved by sending questionnaires to the groups according to geographical area: the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, and the Far West. Questionnaires were also proportionately distributed according to population area: urban, suburban, and rural. Students, teachers, administrators, and board members were asked to describe the area--urban, suburban, or rural--in which their school districts were located, and teachers, administrators, and board members were asked to indicate the total student enrollment in their districts.

1.1 An even distribution of returns was received from the four geographical areas mentioned above.

1.2 The majority of the parents and legislators were from suburban and rural areas, and the majority of the employers, from urban and suburban areas.

1.3 Nearly half of the students reported that they attended schools in urban areas, and the next largest group (over one third), that they go to suburban schools; the remainder attended rural schools. Nearly fifty percent of the teachers taught in suburban schools, and slightly less than a third, in urban schools; the remainder taught in rural schools. The largest number of administrators indicated that their schools were located in suburban areas, and the next largest number, in urban areas. The response from board members was more evenly distributed than the responses from any other group. More than one third of the board members reported

that their school districts were in rural areas, and slightly less than a third, in suburban and in urban areas, respectively.

1.4 A small percentage of the teachers, administrators, and board members who responded to the question on school district enrollment indicated that their districts had enrollments of over 40,000 students. The majority of the respondents, however, reported that their school districts had between 5,000 and 20,000 students.

2. The second objective, to elicit background information from the respondents, was accomplished by requesting each group to give certain varied information that was relevant to this study.

2.1 Parents, perhaps the group most concerned about the implementation of minimum competency testing in the schools, were asked to give the following information: sex, age, marital status, ethnic origin, number of children, number of school-age children living at home, family income, job title, and academic background.

Approximately two thirds of the parents were females, and one third were males. The majority of the parents were between the ages of 30 and 49, and the vast majority indicated that they were married. Over 85% of the parents identified themselves as caucasians. The average number of children in each family was 3, and over 85% of the parents reported that they had school-age children living at home.

The vast majority of the parents had family incomes of over $15,000. We may infer that many of these families had two incomes, since over 40% of the women respondents reported that they worked. The majority of these were white collar workers, educators, and middle managers. The

majority of the male respondents were professionals, educators, and middle managers. Very few of the parents were blue collar workers or laborers, perhaps because over 75% of the parents reported that they had college backgrounds. Less than one fourth of the parents had no schooling beyond the high school level, and only one parent had not finished high school. That the majority of the respondents had above-average incomes and educations may be attributed to the fact that the parents surveyed for this study were selected from lists supplied by Parent-Teacher Associations in all states.

2.2 Students were asked to specify their grade, primary language, whether they held jobs, their primary outside activities, their academic records and academic objectives. Since high school students will be primarily affected by the implementation of minimum competency testing, the majority of the questionnaires were sent to students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. A small number of questionnaires were also distributed to students in the 9th grade and to those in their first- or second-year of college.

One third of the responses were from students in the 10th grade. Slightly more than one fourth of the students were in the 12th grade and slightly less than one fourth, in the 11th grade. The other responses were evenly distributed among students in the 9th grade, in their first year of college, and in their second year of college.

More than 80% of the students reported that English was their primary home language. More than 40% of the students had jobs and worked an average of 18.8 hours a week, but most did not find "jobs" as

time-consuming as social activities. The largest number of students--over 40%--listed social events as their primary activity. Slightly more than 18% listed outside work, 16% homework, and 1% reading.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they were honor or above-average students, while less than one third described themselves as average. Only 1.1% of the students indicated that they were below average. The vast majority of the students expected to attend college, and over 55% reported that they intended to finish college. However, teachers, administrators, and board members did not agree with the students' high appraisal of themselves; therefore, one can conclude that the students' reports of their high academic achievements and objectives may be somewhat unrealistic.

2.3 Teachers were asked to indicate which grades and subjects they taught. The vast majority of the respondents were high school teachers, and most of these taught more than one grade. The major subjects taught by these teachers were: English, Mathematics, Vocational Studies, the Social Sciences, and the Sciences.

2.4 Teachers, administrators, and board members were asked how many years they had been in their present positions. They were also asked to identify the degrees they held and to indicate whether they were interested in further schooling.

Approximately half of the teachers and administrators reported that they had been in their positions for ten years or less, and half indicated that they had been in their positions for eleven or more years. The vast majority of the board members had held their positions for fewer than

ten years.

Approximately half of the teachers reported that they had bachelor degrees or technical training and half that they had master degrees. Only one teacher had a doctorate degree. In contrast, nearly 90% of the administrators had graduate degrees. Indeed, more than one third of the administrators had doctorate degrees. More than half of the board members reported that they had bachelor or graduate degrees. Over 23% did not respond to this question, and most of the others indicated that they had high school diplomas or some college or technical training.

Over 40% of the teachers reported that they were interested in further education, the majority of which indicated that they would like to obtain master degrees. A very small percentage of the board members and administrators reported that they were interested in further education.

2.5 Employers were asked to indicate their job titles, years in present position, education background and to indicate whether their responsibilities include the screening of applicants and whether their firms have minimum requirements for employment.

The majority of the respondents were managers, directors, officers, or owners, and the majority had been in their positions for ten or fewer years. The vast majority had graduated from college. Less than half of the employers reported that their firms had minimum requirements for employment, and the majority of these specified a high school diploma. Since questionnaires were sent to employers in a wide range of business, industrial, and service organizations, many replied that requirements depended on the position.

2.6 Legislators were asked to describe their constituencies, to indicate how many years they had been in their positions, and to give their educational backgrounds.

More than 30% of the legislators did not describe their constituencies. Of those that did, the largest response was from those who served suburban areas. The majority of legislators had been in office for ten or fewer years, and the vast majority were college graduates.

3. The third objective, to identify student problems in the basic skills, was accomplished by requesting (i) parents, employers, and legislators to indicate the degree of proficiency that students had achieved in reading, writing, mathematics, listening, and speaking, and (ii) students, teachers, administrators, and board members to identify the particular problems students had in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. They were also asked whether or not students were good listeners and speakers.

3.1 The vast majority of parents, employers, and legislators indicated that students have achieved some reading proficiency. Students seemed to agree with this evaluation since a majority reported that they had very little or no difficulty in any of the five reading areas: understanding the meaning of words in context, grasping central ideas, grasping supporting ideas, understanding the author's purpose, and integrating reading matter with experience. Students did indicate, however, that they had the most difficulty in grasping supporting ideas.

Teachers, administrators, and board members did not agree with the students' evaluation. A majority in each group reported that students

had some or great difficulty in all five areas. Teachers and board members did agree, however, that students have the most difficulty in grasping supporting ideas, whereas administrators reported that students have the most difficulty in understanding the author's purpose.

3.2 A slight majority of parents and legislators reported that students had some proficiency in writing, but the vast majority of employers believed that students had very little proficiency in this area. The majority of students again reported that they had very little or no difficulty in the areas listed under writing: organizing ideas, stating ideas clearly, constructing sentences without gross errors; understanding punctuation and mechanics; using words properly; spelling; and writing legibly. However, a larger number of students indicated that they had some or great difficulty in writing than they did in reading. Organizing ideas and stating ideas clearly were the two areas in which students indicated they had the most difficulties.

Again, teachers, administrators, and board members did not agree completely with the students' evaluation. A vast majority in all groups indicated that students had some or great difficulties in writing. Teachers reported that students had the most difficulties in organizing ideas and in spelling. Administrators and legislators agreed that the students had the most difficulties in organizing ideas and in stating ideas clearly.

3.3 A significant number of parents and legislators reported that students had some proficiency in mathematics. The majority of employers, however, indicated that students had little proficiency in this area.

In contrast, over two thirds of the students reported that they had no difficulty in adding properly, subtracting properly, multiplying properly, and dividing properly. They did report, however, that they had the most difficulties in solving problems properly, with 40% reporting that they had very little difficulty and 40%, no difficulty.

The majority of teachers and legislators reported that students had little or no difficulties in adding, subtracting and multiplying. However, a majority in both groups believed that students had some or great difficulty in dividing and in solving problems. A majority of administrators reported that students had some or great difficulties in all five areas.

3.4 Parents and legislators were divided in their opinions of students' listening proficiency. Approximately half of the respondents in each group reported that students had some listening proficiency and half that they had very little. The majority of employers stated that students had very little listening proficiency. A preponderance of students reported that they were good listeners. A majority of the board members agreed with the students' evaluation of their listening proficiency, whereas a majority of the teachers and administrators reported that the students were not good listeners.

3.5 A majority of the parents and employers reported that students had very little speaking proficiency, whereas the majority of legislators believed that students were good speakers. Teachers, administrators, and board members had a slightly higher opinion of the students' speaking abilities than the students themselves. Only half of the students

reported that they were good speakers. A majority of the teachers, administrators, and board members, however, reported that students were good speakers.

Although the students had a relatively low opinion of their speaking abilities, they consistently had a higher opinion of their abilities in reading, writing, arithmetic, and listening than the adult respondents. Indeed, the opinions of teachers, administrators, and board members varied considerably from those of the students. All of the respondents, including the students, did agree, however, that students have the most difficulties in writing. Students, teachers, and board members gave students the highest rating of proficiency in mathematics, whereas parents, employers, legislators, and administrators reported that students were most proficient in reading.

As pointed out earlier, the students seem to have an unrealistic conception of their academic abilities and achievements. It is difficult not to conclude that they may have been encouraged in these views by their teachers and by school officials. Although the majority of teachers and administrators reported that students have some or great difficulties in reading and writing, and the majority of administrators, that students have some or great difficulties in mathematics, recent reports of grade inflation suggest that students are not being informed of these problems. Until students, both in high school and in colleges, are given more realistic appraisals of their problems and potentials, these problems can or will not be remediated properly.

4. The fourth objective, to identify the key adult-functional competencies that each group considered important enough to be taught in secondary schools, was accomplished by requesting the respondents in each group to designate as "very important," "important," "somewhat important," or "not important" the 54 competencies included under the five broad areas of occupational knowledge, government and law, health, consumer economics, and community resources.

4.1 Under the category of occupational knowledge, a majority in each group, with the exception of students and employers, designated using words properly on employment applications and on the job as a very important competency. A majority of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and board members also listed writing letters to request applications and interviews as very important. The only competency designated as very important by a majority in each group was filling out various employment forms.

A majority of students, teachers, administrators, and board members indicated that using words properly on employment applications, writing letters to request applications and interviews, filling out various employment forms, and using payroll statements to calculate wages and deductions were competencies which should be taught in school. A majority of parents, employers, and legislators also reported that these tasks should be taught in school, but indicated that the focus should be minor.

4.2 Under the category of government and law, a majority of the adult respondents designated two of the eight competencies as very important: registering to vote and following established voting procedures

and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life. A majority of the students did not consider any of the competencies as very important.

None of the eight competencies were designated by a majority of students, teachers, and board members as ones which should be taught in school. A majority of administrators specified two: registering to vote and following established voting procedures and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by the law. A preponderance of parents, employers, and legislators reported that these competencies should be included in school curriculums. A majority of the employers indicated that the focus should be major, a majority of parents, that the focus should be minor, and legislators were evenly divided.

4.3 Under the category of health, only one competency--reading and interpreting words, pictures, and diagrams that describe various areas of health--received the highest rating by any group of respondents. Students and teachers listed this competency as very important.

A majority of students, teachers, and board members indicated that selecting a balanced meal was a competency that should be taught in school. A preponderance of parents, employers, and legislators reported that the competencies included under health should be included in school curriculums but stated that the focus should be minor.

4.4 Under consumer economics, students designated four of the sixteen competencies as very important: reading and interpreting lease agreements, etc., selecting the most appropriate life insurance, selecting the most appropriate health insurance, and using the instructions

that come with income tax forms to fill out tax returns. A majority of the parents and teachers specified the latter competency as very important, and a majority of the teachers also designated using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks and reconciling check debits and credits to calculate checking account balances as very important competencies.

In no case did a majority of all respondents designate any of the sixteen competencies as ones that should be taught in school, except a majority of administrators who designated preparing budgets. Again, a preponderance of parents, employers, and legislators reported that these sixteen tasks should be included in the school curriculum, although a plurality of parents and employers stated that the focus should be minor. In contrast, a plurality of legislators reported that the focus should be major.

4.5 Under community resources, using a clock to note various times in hours, minutes and seconds with reference to day and night was designated by administrators and board members as very important. None of the other twelve competencies were designated by a majority in each group as very important.

None of the thirteen competencies were designated by a majority of students, teachers, administrators, and board members as ones that should be taught in school. A majority of parents, employers and legislators reported that these competencies should be taught in school, although each group felt that the focus should be minor.

To summarize, the twelve competencies which received the highest ratings from the respondents were:

a. filling out various employment forms, designated as very important by a majority in all populations sampled;

b. registering to vote and following established voting procedures and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life, designated as very important by a majority of the six adult populations sampled.

c. using words properly on employment applications and on the job, designated as very important by a majority of five of the populations sampled (parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and legislators) and writing letters to request applications and interviews, also designated as very important by a majority of five of the populations sampled (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and board members).

d. using the instructions that come with income tax forms to fill out tax returns, designated as very important by a majority in three of the populations sampled (students, parents, and teachers).

e. reading and interpreting words, pictures and diagrams that describe various areas of health, designated as very important in two of the populations sampled (students and teachers) and using a clock to note various times in hours, minutes, and seconds with reference to day and night, also designated as very important by a majority of two of the populations sampled (administrators and board members).

f. reading and interpreting lease agreements, contracts, etc.;

selecting the most appropriate life insurance; and selecting the most appropriate health insurance, designated as very important by the students, and reconciling check debits and credits to calculate account balances and using samples of blank checks to fill out personal checks, designated as very important by the teachers.

Five of these twelve competencies were also designated as ones which should be taught in school:

a. using words properly on employment applications and on the job; writing letters to request applications and interviews; and filling out various employment forms, by a majority of students, teachers, administrators and board members;

b. registering to vote and following established voting procedures and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by the law, by a majority of the administrators.

Three competencies which were not selected as very important by a majority in any population sampled were also designated as ones which should be taught in school;

a. using payroll statements to calculate wages and deductions, by a majority of students, teachers, administrators and board members;

b. selecting a balanced meal, by a majority of students, teachers, and board members; and

c. preparing budgets, by a majority of administrators.

Of the five competencies that received the highest rating, three were under the category of occupational knowledge: using words properly on employment applications on the job, filling out various employment

forms, and writing letters to request applications and interviews. Each of these competencies involved writing, the area in which students seem to have the most difficulties. Two of the competencies were under the category of government and law: registering to vote and following established voting procedures and understanding the restrictions and protections afforded by laws normally encountered in daily life.

Although only a small number of competencies were designated as "very important" by a majority of respondents, the greatest number of competencies were considered "important" by a majority of the respondents. There were, however, nineteen competencies which were rated as "somewhat important" and "not important" by a majority in one or more of the populations sampled. They were:

a. reading and understanding pamphlets on pest control and using menus to select various kinds of food and to calculate the total price of a meal for various numbers of people, designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of all populations sampled;

b. using government savings bond payment tables to determine the worth of bonds at various dates after purchase, using interest rates on city bonds to calculate amounts of interest at various dates after purchase, and writing letters requesting reservations designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of the six adult populations sampled.

c. using pamphlets to determine union benefits and obligations, designated somewhat important and not important by a majority of five of the populations sampled (teachers, administrators, board members,

employers, and legislators), using a calorie chart, designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of five of the populations sampled (students, parents, board members, employers, and legislators) and reading and understanding pamphlets describing common diseases found in household pets, also designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of five of the populations sampled (parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and employers).

d. writing letters to travel agencies, designated somewhat important and not important by a majority of four of the populations sampled (teachers, administrators, employers, and legislators).

e. using information gathered from the media to describe ecological problems and using samples of sales tags to calculate the total cost of items after sales taxes have been computed and added in designated somewhat important and not important by a majority of three of the populations sampled (parents, employers, and legislators), and reading and understanding material obtained from community agencies, also designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of three of the populations sampled (students, administrators, and employers).

f. writing a letter to a community agency requesting information, and using the yellow pages for travel information, designated as somewhat important and not important by a majority of two of the populations sampled (employers and legislators).

g. making use of the information provided within consumer guides; identifying and locating sources of community information; matching

the name of the agency with its services; and calculating differences in days, months, and years, designated as somewhat important and not important by employers, and matching the names of diseases with their symptoms, designated as somewhat important and not important by the legislators.

5. The fifth objective, to identify the most desirable approach for a minimum competency program, was accomplished by requesting all groups to indicate which approach they would endorse in a minimum competency program. As stated earlier, the majority of the respondents in each group indicated that they would prefer school programs which emphasized academic skills and general knowledge equally.

Parents, employers, and legislators had previously been asked whether the competencies listed under each specific knowledge area should be given a major or a minor focus in the schools. In general, these respondents indicated that the focus should be minor. However, when given a third choice, that is, giving academic skills and adult competencies an equal emphasis, the majority stated that they prefer that an equal emphasis be given to teaching academic skills and adult competencies.

Recommendations

An overwhelming majority of those surveyed for this report indicated that minimum competencies should be taught in the schools. The respondents also indicated that the teaching of minimum competencies should not take precedence over the teaching of traditional academic skills such as

reading, writing, and arithmetic, but that equal emphasis should be given to both. The respondents, however, were not always in agreement as to which specific competencies should be taught. In light of these findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. ANALYZE LAWS AND POLICIES CAREFULLY BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

To date, many of the guidelines for implementing minimum competency laws have been vague, disjointed, overly broad, and, in some cases, call for a complete restructuring of school curriculums. In addition, the schedules for implementing competency programs and testing are, in some instances, unrealistic. Therefore, before current laws pertaining to the teaching and testing of minimum competencies are implemented, more realistic guidelines should be established.

Since the majority of respondents indicated that they would prefer an approach which gives equal emphasis to the teaching of minimum competencies and academic skills, minimum competency programs should be incorporated into current school curriculums. As pointed out earlier, three of the competencies concerned with occupational knowledge that were rated as "very important" by a majority of the respondents are related to the writing process. These competencies could be taught in writing classes. Other competencies also considered "very important," such as those concerned with the benefits and obligations of citizenship, might be included in social sciences courses without extensively overhauling existing school curriculum. In effect, the teaching and testing of minimum competencies should not be regarded as a revolutionary educational movement but rather as a more effective way of teaching

students the traditional academic skills that they will need to cope in an adult world.

2. PLAN PROPERLY FOR THE FUTURE

Those who feel compelled to respond to the minimum competency movement either by calling for immediate enactment of current laws or for additional laws would do well to note that effective minimum competency programs must include: (1) strong academic leadership; (2) clear statement of goals; (3) careful planning by all concerned with respect to which competencies should be taught, what standards must be applied, and how testing will be conducted; (4) gradual implementation of minimum competency programs, preferably by incorporating such programs into existing curriculums; (5) proper financial and academic support; and (6) continuous research and evaluation.

3. IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

None of the above recommendations can be effectively carried out until better communication is established between those concerned about the implementation of minimum competency programs. As pointed out earlier in this report, no wide-spread agreement exists among the seven groups surveyed, either with regard to the proficiencies and problems of students or to the specific competencies which should be taught in the schools. To effect better communication among these groups and consensus regarding the selection of competencies and the development of testing programs, educators should hold hearings, forums, and conferences to acquaint various sectors of the population with the policies, issues, problems, and future direction of minimum competency programs. They

should also establish working committees which include all sectors of the population when planning policies and procedures.

4. UTILIZE COMPETENCY TESTING PROPERLY

If competency tests are to help deficient students, they must be more carefully designed and given at appropriate times. More specifically, such tests must be designed in a valid and reliable way in order to identify students who have problems attaining essential learning objectives. Further, they must be given early enough in the student's education so that proper remediation can take place.

Carefully-designed competency tests must, of course, be intimately tied to carefully-designed competency programs. That is, students cannot be expected to do well on test items with which they have had no previous experience. Yet, at the same time, reasonable standards must be expected. Although a majority of the respondents indicated that using a clock correctly was a "very important" or "important" competency, it is not an item which should be tested for high school graduation.

The setting of standards is, of course, an ongoing affair and should be made by a panel of testing experts, educators, and community representatives who are capable of selecting those items which should be included as measures of learning. This process involves field testing and rewriting so that standards are properly set and clearly reflect the goals of the school curriculum. Striking a balance between state mandates and local control is not easy, but it can be done if consensus is reached on well defined competencies and properly designed

tests that measure the acquisition of skills or competencies.

Another major problem is how the test results will be used and how the states and schools respond to these results. Even when the tests are valid and reliable, they merely describe rather than solve the student's problems. Therefore, such tests should be thought of as a primary diagnostic tool. Ultimately, problems revealed through these tests will only be resolved by properly trained teachers, aided by effective materials.

5. IMPROVE THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

Develop or create in-service training programs for teachers that will help them develop strategies for enhancing diagnostic/prescriptive learning. Teachers must have knowledge of the basic skills and be familiar with techniques for diagnosing and evaluating them. More specifically they must be certain they can intelligently and effectively provide instruction in the competencies selected.

6. EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF REMEDIATION EFFORTS

As pointed out in this survey, high school students obviously have problems in the basic skills, possibly because principals and teachers believe that the basic skills are really elementary subjects. This attitude must be changed and greater emphasis placed upon remediation efforts in the basic skills. Pressure from those states insisting on minimum competency requirements make it essential that greater attention be paid to these skills at the secondary level. In order to assist in doing this, the secondary schools should demand more funds from the giant federal compensatory education programs.

7. ENGAGE IN ONGOING RESEARCH

In working with minimum competency programs, the need for research is absolutely essential. People involved in such endeavor should do the following:

1. Identify sources of information and assistance.
2. Design and implement intelligent plans for accountability.
3. Create item banks for testing purposes.
4. Study the effect of testing on all types of students and analyze the relationship between dropout rates and minimum competency testing.
5. Monitor progress of implementation efforts and engage in collection of longitudinal data.
6. Disseminate and exchange information.

In short, the findings of this study indicate students have serious problems in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, and listening; and although there was some agreement about which adult functional competencies were "very important" or "important," there was no definite agreement about which ones should be included in the school curriculum. All of which is to say that anyone working in this realm should proceed with extreme caution. Further, this study should be considered as a definite call for additional research which will foster a more intelligent dialogue among all those who advocate minimum competency programs and testing.

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APPENDIX

STATE ACTIVITY

MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado

May 10, 1978

STATE	ACTION TAKEN	SETTING OF STANDARDS	GRADE LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS ASSESSED	USE OF STANDARDS AND TEST	COMMENTS
Alabama	State Board Resolution 1977	*State Department of Education	9th - 12th	*Basic skills state test	For high school graduation	*The State Superintendent of Education has appointed a committee of 100 to study and make recommendations on standards, the test and high school diploma issue. These recommendations are due 7-1-78.
Arizona	State Dept. of Education Ruling	Set by the State Dept. of Educ. Assessment by Local District No statewide test prescribed	8th Grade 12th Grade	Reading, Writing, Computation	For Graduation from 8th and 12th grades	Effective January 1, 1976, students must be able to read, write and compute at the 6th grade level to receive the standard 8th grade certificate and at the 9th grade level for high school graduation.
California	(early exit test) SB 1112-1972 SB 1243-1975 SB 1502-1976	Test and cut-off standards set by the California Department of Education.	Age 16 to adult	Process areas of reading and computation content areas: consumer economics and mathematics	Award high school diploma and leave school with parent permission	Title of program: California High School Proficiency Test Test administration and security handled under contract with private testing corporation.
	AB 3408-Ch. 856 1976	State Board to supply performance indicators and examples of minimum standards Local districts set graduation standards.	Test once between 7-9 and twice between grades 10-11.	Reading, Writing, Computation	For high school graduation	The act also prescribes course of study requirements. In effect for the graduation class of 1980.

(California continued next page.)

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Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado

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California (Continued from page one.)	AB 65, Ch. 894	Local districts	Once between grades 4-6; once between grades 7-9; twice between grades 10 & 11.	Reading comprehension, writing, computation skills	For remediation and grade promotion decisions	This law is to move California into elementary grade testing.
Colorado	SB 180-1975 C.R.S. 22-32-109.5	Local Boards	9 - 12 - test twice a year	Local District Option	Local District Option for high school graduation	If a local board of education imposes a proficiency test for high school graduation, it must follow the stipulations of this act.
Connecticut	State Board Resolution, Nov. 1977 (Early exit program)	State Department using existing GED and APL test standards	16-year-olds	Academic: General Educational Development (GED) test. Life Skills: Adult Performance Level (APL) test.	With appropriate counseling and follow-up teaching, students can leave school with a high school equivalency diploma.	Final implementation contingent upon $300,000 appropriation from legislature in 1978.
Delaware	State Board of Education Resolution 1976	State Department of Education, after baseline test is given	Baseline instrument grade 11 1978	Level II Competencies, i.e.: the application reading, writing and mathematics.	For high school graduation	The development of the baseline testing instrument has been awarded to a private test contractor.

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Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
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Florida	CSSB 340 1975 F.S. 229.814 CSSB 107 1976 F.S. 76.226	State and local boards	Grades 3, 5, 8 and 11	Basic skill areas Functional literacy	For high school graduation, grade promotion and early exit from high school	Titled: The Educational Accountability Act Places ban on social promotion
Georgia	State Board of Education action	State Board and State Department	Grades 4, 8 and 11	Grades 4 & 8: reading, math, social studies and science. H.S. test under development	The State Board of Education has not taken final action on the use of the tests.	The student assessment program is part of a long-range plan to fund local school districts through a program of comprehensive planning.
Idaho	State Board of Education resolution	State Board of Education	Grades 9 - 12	Reading, writing arithmetic and spelling	For high school graduation at the option of local districts	Students passing the proficiency program will receive a diploma with the state board seal. In districts not participating, students will receive district diploma.
Indiana	State Board Resolution adopted Feb. 1978	To be set by local districts with advisory committee of teachers, administrators, parents and community members	3, 6, 8 & 10	Reading	Primarily for remediation. Local district may use for other purposes.	Rules and regulations supporting this resolution awaiting Attorney General's and Governor's approval. 3/14/78

STATE ACTIVITY

MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado May 10, 1978

STATE	ACTION TAKEN	SETTING OF STANDARDS	GRADE LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS ASSESSED	USE OF STANDARDS AND TEST	COMMENTS
Kansas	State Board of Education adopted policy statement, January 1978.	State Dept. of Education will set standards and goals with assistance of local districts.	3, 6, 9 & 12	Academic skills: reading and mathematics, grades 3, 6 & 9. Life skills: grade 12	Local district option	Legislation is pending which has a good chance of passing yet in 1978. This policy statement did not include a program of implementation. Enacted law will supersede.
	Senate Substitute for HB 3115 (passed in April 1978)	State Board of Education	Grades 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11	Reading and mathematics	Not mentioned in law	Law calls for a voluntary participation in '78-'79 school year, full district participation in '79-'80. At the close of the '79-'80 school year, results of the pilot effort are to be reported back to the Governor and the Legislature.
Kentucky	State Board of Education adopted 4-yr competency plan in 1977	State Department with task force assistance	Grades 3, 5, 8 and 11	Criterion-referenced test in reading, writing and arithmetic	For high school graduation and grade promotion	
Louisiana	HB 810, Act 709, 1976	State Superintendent of Schools	Grades 4, 8 and 11	Basic communication and computational skill areas with criterion-referenced test	No mention of graduation or grade promotion	Requirements a part of the accountability and assessment law

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Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado

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Maine	Enacted amended LD 1810 Ch. 78 of the Private Special Laws	State Department of Education	Grade 11	(See Comments)	For high school graduation	The law specifies that the Commissioner of Education is to be assisted in the development of the assessment instrument and the areas to be tested by a state wide committee. The law names the organizations to be represented.
Maryland	HB 1433, M.A. C., Art. 77, Sec. 980 1976 and HB 1462, Ch. 559 - 1977	State Board of Education	Grades 2 - 12 Grades 3, 7, 9 & 11	Reading	For grade promotion and high school graduation	Students not meeting minimum requirements may be retained in some grade or enrolled in remedial program
Michigan	State Department of Education	State Department of Education	Grades 4, 7, 10	Reading and Math	For local district use	12th grade minimal competency test, covering life role skills under study
Missouri	State Board of Education	State Department of Education	Grade 8	The application of reading, mathematics and government/economics skills	No mandate for graduation or grade promotion	The Basic Education Skills test, developed by the Department of Education, has been field tested in grades 8, 10 and 12.

STATE ACTIVITY

MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado 80295

May 10, 1978

STATE	ACTION TAKEN	SETTING OF STANDARDS	GRADE LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS ASSESSED	USE OF STANDARDS AND TEST	COMMENTS
Nebraska	State Department of Education	Local School Districts	Begins in Grade 5 and continues until mastery is achieved by each student in each skill area	Reading, writing and mathematics	State developed test is not to be used for grade retention or promotion	Local school districts may use the Nebraska Assessment Battery of Essential Learning Skills (N-ABELS) or develop their own test.
Nevada	AB 400-1977	State Board of Education	Grades 6, 9 & 12	Reading, writing and mathematics	For high school graduation	Students may be promoted to the next grade if examination is failed but remedial work is to be provided
New Hampshire	State Department of Education	State Department of Education	Grade 4 Grade 8 & 12 under development	Communications and Mathematics	Grade promotion and high school graduation not mentioned	Program is to serve as guidelines for local school districts
New Jersey	A.1736,Ch.97 1976 State Department of Education	Statewide committees State Department of Education	- 3, 6, 9 & 11	Reading and mathematics Reading and mathematics Life skills under study	Student diagnosis and remedial identification Identification of students needing instructional assistance.	Local districts are to provide remedial assistance in order for students to meet state standards Development of testing instrument is under contract to a private test development company

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Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado 80295

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New Mexico	State Board of Education	State	Elementary level, grade choice up to local district and grade 10	Elementary: Local option Secondary: Proficiency battery based on adult performance level (APL) and a writing sample	Proficiency endorsement on high school diploma if test is passed	The state department of education is working on a series of basic skill area curriculum guides
New York	State Board of Regents	State Board of Regents	Grades 9 - 12	Reading and mathematics with a criterion referenced test; also, civics and citizenship practical science, health & drug education and writing and language skills	For high school graduation	The New York Department of Education also adminsters the Regents Diploma Program and the pupil evaluation plan (PEP) both related to measuring student performance in the basic skill areas.
North Carolina	Enacted HB 204	By Competency Test Commission created by law	Grade 11 beginning in 1978-79	To be determined by the Competency Test Commission. See Comments.	For high school graduation	The test is to measure "those skills and that knowledge thought necessary to enable an individual to function independently and successfully in assuming the responsibilities of citizenship."

(North Carolina continued next page.)

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Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado 80295

May 10, 1978

STATE	ACTION TAKEN	SETTING OF STANDARDS	GRADE LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS ASSESSED	USE OF STANDARDS AND TEST	COMMENTS
North Carolina (Continued)	Enacted HB 205	By Competency Test Commission (separate from HB 204)	Grades 1 & 2 criterion referenced test Grades 3, 6 & 9 "Norm" referenced test	To be determined by the Competency Test Commission	To be determined by the Competency Test Commission.	
Oregon	State Board of Education 1972	Local Districts	District Option	Reading, writing and computation. Local option for personal development, social responsibility and career development.	For high school graduation	Graduation requirements are based on course credit, attendance and required competencies in personal, social and career areas.
Oklahoma	State Board of Education	Decision will follow baseline data test	Grades 3, 6, 9 --- Grade 12	Reading --- Survival Skills	Decision will follow baseline data test	The baseline test instrument will be given to 15,000 students in the fall of 1977

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STATE ACTIVITY

MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

Prepared by:
Chris Pipho, Associate Director
Department of Research and Information
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado 80295

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Rhode Island	State Department of Education		Grades 4, 8 and age 17 used in pilot test	Comprehension Analysis and Evaluation known as the "life skills"	For local district and state department use. Competency base high school diploma under study.	The Rhode Island master plan for evaluation and the statewide assessment program have jointly contributed to the pilot testing in the life skills areas
Tennessee	State Board of Education Nov. 10, 1977 State Board of Education Nov. 10, 1977	State Department of Education Local districts	Grades 11 & 12 Grades 4, 5, 6 and 8	Reading, math, grammar and spelling Subjects at discretion of local district	For high school graduation, Class of 1982 Remediation	Two different programs were established in the same court ruling.
Utah	State Board of Education January 1977	Local district	Local district	Reading, writing, speaking, listening, arithmetic, democratic governance, consumerism, problem solving	For high school graduation, Class of 1980	Local districts will choose the test and set the cut-off standards.
Vermont	State Board of Education	State Board of Education	Continuous	Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics. Area of reasoning is under study.	For high school graduation	Mastery of the basic competencies is to be one requirement for graduation unless student has a limiting handicap.

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Virginia	State Board of Education ruling	Broad: State Specific: Local	--	Functional literacy in communicative skills--reading, writing and speaking. Computational skills, history and cultures of United States including processes of democratic governance and economic system. Ability to pursue higher education or gain employment.	For high school graduation, Class of 1981, and remediation	It is assumed that local districts will choose grade or grade levels to test. State mandates it be done before graduation.
	HB 256-1976	State Board of Education in cooperation with local districts	All grades yearly with first emphasis in grades K-6.	Reading, communications and mathematics	To measure progress of individual students	Act known as The Standard of Quality Act.

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Washington	SB 3026 HB 1345-1976	Local districts	4th and 8th	Standardized achievement test in reading, mathematics and language arts	For school district and parent use	School districts are encouraged to develop a separate test for second grade for the early identification of pupils needing assistance in language and computational skills.
Wyoming	State Board of Education policy	Local districts will establish specific standards	--	Reading, writing and computing with proficiency. Process and structure of democratic governance and free enterprise	For high school graduation	The start-up date and rules and regulations are to be drawn up by the State Department of Education. Local districts will verify the state standards and are encouraged to go beyond the minimum standards set by the State Board of Education.